BHAGAVADGITA
XPLAINED



The Bhagavadgita Explained

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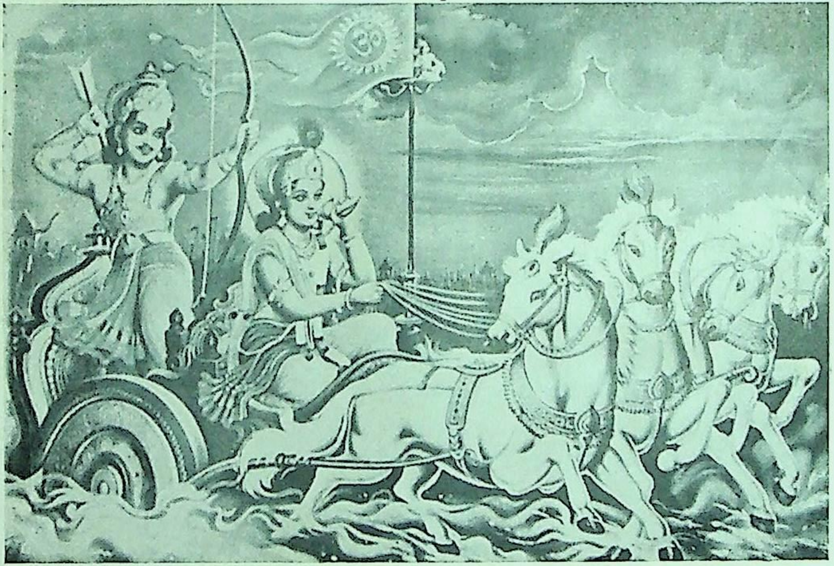
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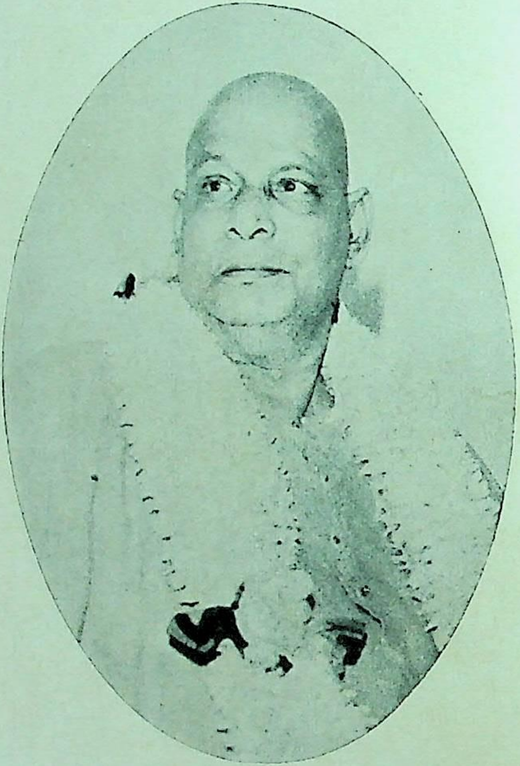
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LORD KRISHNA AND ARJUNA



H.H. SRI SWAMI SIVANANDA

Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya

MEDITATION ON THE GITA

O Mother Gita, I meditate on Thee, because it was the Supreme Lord Himself who spiritually transmitted Thy teachings through His lotus-like lips to Arjuna in the midst of the battle-field of the Mahabharata War. I also meditate on the great Sage Vyasa, the supreme intellect, the author of the great scripture, the Mahabharata, which is also called the *Panchama-Veda* (the fifth Veda), for it contains the supreme wisdom to humanity. I prostrate myself before you, O noble Sage, due to your oneness with the cosmic intelligence, you were able to absorb the teachings of the Lord. The Mahabharata is like the oil in the lamp of the heart. You have lighted this lamp with the wisdom of the Gita and thus helped people to overcome

their day-to-day problems and the darkness of ignorance. My salutations to you, O Sage, for you have beautifully narrated the variegated functions of the human mind by means of the different characters, who acted under the different circumstances in the great scripture, the Mahabharata, which is also called a 'Yoga Sastra,' for, it teaches the individual the way to unite itself with the Universal. You have compared the Pandava side to the higher mind and the Kaurava side to the lower mind in the Mahabharata War.

In the river of the Mahabharata battle Bhishma and Drona form the two strong protective banks, difficult to cross over. These two were invincible warriors to whom Arjuna was terribly attached and this is what made him dejected and reluctant to perform his duty in the war. Likewise, O Sage, you have taught that attachment is a great obstacle in the spiritual path. King

Jayadratha brought the death of Arjuna's son, Abhimanyu, by unfair means and became the centre of a great fury in the war. So the waters of the river of Mahabharata war are compared to this evil king. Sakuni, the maternal uncle of Duryodhana and his brothers, who won the game of chess by fraudulent means, is compared to a huge blue water-lily lying on the surface of the river, tempting the eye and thus making one unwary of the dangers in the river. Shalya is like a powerful shark in the waters, hard to encounter. Kripa Acharya is the strong current of the river, for his valour spurred the forces constantly like a rushing current. Karna who was proud because he had mastery over the science of archery is like a high wave in the waters of the river, which rises up as if in pride and self-will. With a spirit of retaliation Asvatthama and Vikarna killed many in the Pandava army

by unlawful means and so they are the crocodiles swallowing their victims in the river. Like a whirlpool (in the river of battle) directing all the flow of water to its motion, Duryodhana, because of greed for wealth, power and position, employed various treacherous ways to destroy the Pandavas. You have taught that desire for wealth, power and position ruins one's life altogether. You have revealed to the world that only by constant remembrance of God and His glories and by the complete surrender of self to the Almighty as did the Pandava brothers to Lord Sri Krishna, people can overcome conflicts in their life and cross the ocean of Samsara, i.e., cycle of births and deaths. As the Pandava brothers crossed the river of the Mahabharata war with the help of Sri Krishna as their helmsman, bless me with a pure mind and intellect and enable me to pray and surrender myself to Lord Sri Krishna at

all times, to cross beyond the darkness of ignorance to the Light of Immortality.

I prostrate myself before Thee, O Lord Krishna, son of Vasudeva and Devaki, the joy of the Gopis of Vrindavan. O Lord! just as men get their wishes fulfilled when they go under the shade of the celestial Parijata tree, Thou hast dispelled the miseries of the Pandavas and others who took shelter under Thy lotus-like feet and made them desireless and immortal.

I meditate on Thee, O Supreme Lord, in the form of the charioteer to Arjuna in the midst of two armies, holding the whip in one hand and imparting the divine wisdom to Arjuna with the symbol of knowledge (Jnana-Mudra) in the other hand. In this symbol, the middle, ring and little fingers are held straight and close together. These represent the three modes of Nature (Prakriti) viz., Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. The index finger which represents the indivi-

dual soul is bent towards the thumb, which represents the Supreme Brahman, and touches it. When the individual soul stands aloof from the three *Gunas,* it attains union with Brahman.

My salutations to Thee, Lord Krishna, the world teacher, the destroyer of evil and protector of righteous people. My prostrations to Thee, O Madhava, the source of supreme bliss; Thou alone canst make the dumb man eloquent and the cripple cross the mountains. With Thy Grace nothing is impossible.

O Lord, like a cowherd boy Thou hast milked the entire essence of wisdom from the cows of the Upanishads for the benefit of Arjuna, the calf, and for those with devoted and purified intellects.

O Lord, I surrender myself to Thee, who art worshipped by all the gods including Brahma, through the chanting of the

Vedas, to invoke Thy Grace, and to receive their respective powers. The Yogins realise Thee when their mind gets absorbed in Thee through deep meditation. Thy real nature is not known either to the gods who live in heaven or to the demons in the nether regions, because Thou art the source of all. I offer my prostrations to Thee.

O Lord, Thou hast lived as a personal example and taught the technique to merge in Thee in the form of the Gita bestowed upon humanity. Kindly bless me with that sharp intellect through which to grasp Thy teachings and merge in Thee.

O Mother Gita! I meditate on Thee. Guide my intellect and mind to lead the Gita-way-of-life and to attain God-consciousness for ever and ever. OM.

THE BHAGAVADGITA EXPLAINED

INTRODUCTION

Dhritarashtra and Pandu were brothers. Dhritarashtra married Gandhari, and Pandu married two wives viz., Kunti and Madri. King Pandu was cursed for a sin, while hunting, due to which he was not permitted to unite with his wife. Kunti got a boon through her sincere service to a wise sage in her younger age and she begot three children, namely Yudhishthira, Bhima and Arjuna respectively, from Yama, Vayu and Indra. Madri had twins, Nakula and Sahadeva, through the celestial physicians called Asvini-Devatas. Dhritarashtra had one hundred and one children by his wife Gandhari. Pandu passed away and his sons, the Pandavas, were brought up by Dhritarashtra along with his sons known as Kauravas. The Pandavas and Kauravas

grew up together, but due to the braveness and intelligence of the former, the Kauravas were unable to tolerate them. Hence, the Pandavas decided to live separately, sharing half of their kingdom.

The Pandavas' pomp, wealth and glory displayed during the Rajasuya Yajna aroused deep jealousy and greed in the mind of Duryodhana, the chief of the Kauravas, who, with the cunning advice of his uncle Sakuni, invited Yudhishthira to a game of dice and fraudulently defeated him, whereby all his wealth and possessions, including Draupadi, were lost. Finally, it was settled that the Pandavas, including Draupadi, should repair to the forest for 12 years in exile, after which they had to live incognito for another year, untraced by the Kauravas. During this period the kingdom was to be ruled by Duryodhana.

Having successfully completed these thirteen years, facing many obstacles and

dangers caused by the Kauravas, the Pandavas, as per the terms of the agreement, approached the Kauravas for their share of the kingdom. Duryodhana, however, flatly refused to give them even as much land as can be covered by the point of a needle. According to the advice of mother Kunti and by the inspiration of Lord Krishna, the Pandavas decided upon war and tried to establish their rightful claim on the kingdom by overcoming the Kauravas.

Duryodhana and Arjuna from the side of the Kauravas and Pandavas respectively were sent to Dvaraka to seek the help of the Yadava hero, Lord Krishna, in the battle. They both found Krishna resting on a couch in his palace, and Duryodhana went in and occupied a nice seat at the head of the couch, while Arjuna stood near the feet of the Lord. The moment Sri Krishna opened his eyes he naturally saw Arjuna and then he saw Duryodhana sitting on a

chair, at the head of the couch. After enquiry of their welfare and the purpose of their visit, Sri Krishna, according to the prevailing custom, gave the first chance of choice to Arjuna because of his young age, and also because of his first vision on Arjuna. Krishna asked Arjuna to fulfil his desire in selection either of unarmed Krishna or his entire powerful army called *Narayani Sena*. Arjuna, who was a devotee of Sri Krishna, expressed his desire to have Krishna with him, neglecting the powerful Narayani Sena, even though Krishna had warned that he would remain a witness, bound by the vow of not participating in battle and not taking up arms. Duryodhana with great delight, thinking that Arjuna was foolish, expressed his desire for the powerful Narayani Sena to help his side in the battle, and returned to Hastinapura.

When Krishna asked Arjuna why he chose him, when he was not for taking up

arms, Arjuna said, "O Lord! You have the power to destroy all the forces by a mere sight. Why, then, should I prefer that worthless army? I have for a long time been cherishing a desire in my heart that you should act as my charioteer. Kindly fulfil my desire in this war." The Lord who is ever the most devoted lover of his devotees accepted this request with pleasure and thus Krishna became the charioteer of Arjuna in the battle of the Mahabharata.

After the return of Duryodhana and Arjuna from Dvaraka, Lord Krishna himself went once to Hastinapura as the emissary of the Pandavas and tried to prevent the war. But then, under the guidance of Sakuni, the egoistic Duryodhana refused to agree to the peace mission and tried to imprison Lord Krishna, at which Krishna showed his Supreme Form (*Visvarupa*). Even the blind Dhritarashtra saw it by the

Lord's Grace. The blind king Dhritarashtra, due to his attachment to his sons, failed to control them, and the Kaurava chief, Duryodhana, with vain hope, decided to meet the powerful Pandavas in the war.

When both sides were prepared to commence the battle, the sage Vedavyasa approached blind Dhritarashtra and said. 'If you wish to see this terrible carnage with your own eyes I can give you a gift of vision.' The Kaurava king replied, 'O chief of Brahmarshis! I have no desire to see with my own eyes this slaughter of my family, but I should like to hear all the details of the battle.' Then the sage conferred the gift of divine vision on Sanjaya (Dhritarashtra's trusted counsellor) and told the king, "Sanjaya will describe to you all the incidents of the war. Whatever happens in the course of the war, he will directly see, hear or otherwise come to know. Whether an incident takes place be-

fore his eyes or behind his back during the day or night, privately or in public, and whether it is reduced to actual action or appears only in thought, it will not remain hidden from his view. He will come to know everything, exactly as it happens. Neither weapon will touch his body nor will he feel tiresome. Finally, the victory will be for righteousness."

After the ten days of continued war between the Pandavas and the Kauravas, when the great warrior Bhishma was thrown down from his chariot by Arjuna, Sanjaya announces the news to Dhritarashtra. The blind king, in agony, asks Sanjaya to narrate the full details of the previous ten days' war, from the very beginning, in all detail, as it happened. Here commences the Bhagavadgita.

CHAPTER I

Dhritarashtra asks Sanjaya with an ego-conscious mind, blinded with selfishness and eagerness, what his people and the sons of Pandu assembled together in Dharmakshetra and Kurukshetra, eager for battle, do. The land is called Dharmakshetra, because the field where they assembled for battle is the place where celestials like Agni, Indra and Brahma performed their austerities. It is also called Kurukshetra, where king Kuru, the ancestor of the Kauravas, also performed severe austerities. It was observed that whoever leaves his life in this land during a righteous war will go to heaven, and so it was selected for the purpose of the battle. Then Sanjaya says: Duryodhana, the ruling king of the Kauravas, saw the Pandavas' army, which, though small in number when com-

pared to that of the Kauravas, was arranged in such a way that it seemed bigger. Duryodhana, moving proudly towards his teacher, Drona's side, controlling his inner fearful attitude, as he had to fight with the righteous Pandavas, excited the great leader into a revengeful attitude by reminding him of his past enmity with Drupada, whose son was leading the Pandava army. He also mentions this to encourage Drona, because he knows the powerful strength of Krishna, Arjuna, Bhima, etc., and of other powerful warriors on the side of the Pandavas. He knew that he was on the wrong side (Adharma) and in order to encourage his army-chief, Bhishma, ordered all others to protect him from all sides.

The family-chief as well as army-chief Bhishma blows his conch as a sign to commence the war and all others follow him and produce tremendous sounds by conches, kettledrums, tabors and cow-horns from the

Kaurava side. Then, from the side of the Pandavas the Lord Krishna and Arjuna seated on a big, well-decorated chariot (with a *Hanuman* flag on top, from which Hanuman, son of Vayu, promised help), yoked with white horses, symbolising purity in all respects, and the other Pandavas blew their celestial and powerful conches as a challenging reply to the Kauravas, with which the sky and earth produced echoes and terrified the hearts of the Kaurava army as a whole.

On seeing the sons of Dhritarashtra arrayed for battle, Arjuna requests Sri Krishna to place his chariot between the two armies, in order to see the warriors. Krishna places the chariot where Bhishma, Drona and other great warriors were standing. On seeing his teachers, kith and kin, the evil of war explained by Vidura came to his memory. Sakuni thought of a cunning plan to discourage the hearts of the

Pandavas and asked Vidura (who was very sincere and respectful to the Pandavas) to go to the good brothers and point out the undesirable results of the war, such as accumulation of sins in killing their own teachers and relatives, all the women of the country losing their husbands, due to which unrighteousness will dominate the land, loss of the country's wealth and property, killing of harmless animals like elephants, horses, etc. Due to this advice, Arjuna refuses to fight, stricken with grief.

Arjuna, instead of speaking about his desire to rule the kingdom without killing his own teachers and relatives, tells Krishna, forgetting his own royal duty, about the disability of his body to hold even the *Gandiva* bow, and other bad omens foreboding failure in the battle. In fear of killing his own teachers, with anxiety, unconscious of the power of Krishna, Arjuna talks like a wise man, about the evil con-

sequences of war, and says that he wants neither pleasure after killing his own relatives and Gurus nor even the three worlds to rule as a result of war. He concludes that even if, by attachment, the Kauravas are to kill him, it would be better than the enjoyment of kingdom after the death of all relatives. With delusion and grief, forgetting the Omniscient power of Krishna, he argues that due to destruction of family the immemorial religious rites will perish, the women in families will become corrupt, with which confusion of castes that follows will lead to hell the slayers of the families. Arjuna decides that it would be desirable that the Kauravas kill him in the battle while he is standing unarmed and unresisting. Thus, having expressed his inability, laden with sorrow, Arjuna sat on the chariot, casting down his bow and arrows.

This chapter teaches humanity that:

When the mind is blinded with affection

and selfishness, as with Dhritarashtra, man will never bother about the welfare of others in the nation, which in result would ruin his own kith and kin as well as the whole nation.

When the mind is clouded with pride, jealousy, greed, crookedness, ego, desire for fame, name and power, as with Duryodhana, man will not hesitate to destroy his own friends and relatives as well as the nation, which in the end results in his own destruction.

When the man fails to do his own duty due to attachment and desire, like Arjuna, he cannot utilise his own strength and courage, or feel the presence of God, even the God is seated before him and ready to help him as Krishna.

When man is sincere, devoted to God, faithful to his master, desireless, and treats friends and foes alike, like Sanjaya, he will have peace of mind, and see the cosmic

form of the Almighty.

This chapter explains that duality is the root-cause of the suffering of humanity. All the suffering of Arjuna explained above is the result of a dualistic character in his personality, viz., disharmony between his mind and heart, thought and feeling. The mind of Arjuna insists on performing the duty as a Kshatriya, to destroy the unrighteous enemy. The heart craves for love and wants to protect the relatives and preceptors from destruction. This internal disharmony created an imbalance between his physical, mental, intellectual, moral and spiritual levels.

Thus ends the first chapter entitled 'The Yoga of the Despondency of Arjuna.'

CHAPTER II

Sanjaya explains the conditions of Arjuna who was agitated due to attachment and fear. Instead of frankly expressing his motive, Arjuna pretends and talks about family-duty, the evil of war, killing of the worshipful Bhishma and Drona, etc. To satisfy Krishna, he talks about his spirit of renunciation and his willingness to live on alms.

On seeing Arjuna's condition, Bhagavan Sri Krishna rebukes him for his dejection accompanied with faint-heartedness and exhorts him to fight. When conflicting thoughts arise in the mind, no one can know what to do and what not to do. At this stage everyone needs the advice of a wise man or *Guru*. When the ego receives repeated blows from the world, it realises its helplessness, it wants to have peace and

then turns to the Supreme Power. Arjuna, after failing to convince Krishna through his seemingly wise thoughts, realises his helplessness and surrenders himself to him. takes refuge in him and becomes his disciple in the true sense. He requests for guidance to get over the conflict of his mind. Krishna, smilingly, dispels Arjuna's ignorance and imaginary fear. After assessing Arjuna's eagerness, sincerity, unselfish surrender and lack of knowledge of the Atman, Krishna first teaches Sankhya Yoga, the true nature of the Atman and then Karma Yoga, the path by which humanity can reach the goal of life,—realisation of the Absolute. Krishna teaches the imperishable nature of the Atman. He says that for the Atman there is no past, present and future. Appreciating the limited understanding of Arjuna, the Lord gives example of the bodily changes of childhood, youth and old age. Just as there is no

change in one's 'I'ness, in spite of all these changes that take place, no change takes place in the Atman even by birth and death, etc. Just as a man casts off worn out clothes and puts on new ones, the individual soul casts off the body and puts on a new one. The body is cast off after experience of the particular desires for which it came to this world.

Each one experiences pleasure and pain, heat and cold due to contact of objects with the senses. The senses carry the sensations, through the nerves, to the mind. One must withdraw the senses from objects like the tortoise, by Yogic practices, and keep the mind in equilibrium. Lord Krishna says that one who has the capacity to treat pleasure and pain alike, alone, is fit for immortality. The Atman is changeless and is real, everything that is changeable is unreal. No one can cause destruction to this imperishable Atman. When

one comes to understand that the Atman has neither birth nor death, one will never grieve for the death of the perishable body. Since the Atman is beyond the five elements viz., earth, water, fire, air and ether, it cannot be cut by weapons, wetted by water, burnt by fire, or dried by wind. It is all-pervading, eternal, unchanging and immovable. Krishna points out that Arjuna cannot bring death to anyone by his powerful weapon, with which he thinks that he will kill his relatives. The Self or Atman cannot be described or understood by the intellect or grasped by the senses, because it is beyond all these.

Now, again, to clarify the disturbed mind of Arjuna, Krishna describes the material benefits of the war. The Kshatriya's happiness consists not in domestic pleasures and comfort but in fighting for a righteous cause, to establish Dharma. 'If you conquer the enemy, you will happily rule the

kingdom, and if you perish in this war you will reach heaven. If you fail to perform your own duty now in the battle, you will be dishonoured by your equals, which is worse than death. When you fight as a duty, without expecting any result, keeping the mind balanced in pleasure and pain, you shall not incur sin.'

Krishna taught Arjuna in the beginning about the Sankhya Yoga and then the path of selfless service, i.e., action performed without expecting its result (Karma Yoga). He says that one should welcome all actions as they come but should be dexterous in performing them with a balanced mind. When one has no desire for the result, the mind will be calm during action. The one-pointedness of the intellect of the wise is due to the absence of desires, and the scattered nature of the intellect of the ignorant is due to desires. With the one-pointed intellect alone can one hope to

reach the immortal. Krishna praises the unselfish worker (Karma Yogi) possessed of equanimity of mind and asks Arjuna to be the same even in battle. He advises Arjuna to fight, free from the desire for acquisition of kingdom or preservation of it. By this method one can go beyond the qualities (*Gunas*) of Prakriti—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas—and be established in the Atman. Those who know the Atman will understand that there is nothing worth possessing in the three worlds. For this, one should have balance of mind in success and failure, pleasure and pain,—which is called Yoga. Skill in action means performing action without attachment, simultaneously maintaining equanimity of mind at all times. By equanimity of mind one can cast off both good and evil deeds, and attain Supreme Consciousness or Self-realisation. On hearing these Arjuna raises four questions about the characteristics of a per-

son of stable mind, i.e., his description, how he speaks, sits and walks. Krishna describes that a stable-minded person (Sthitaprajna) will have no desires at all. In a stable-minded man, the consciousness of the Atman and abandonment of desires are simultaneous experiences. When there are no desires in the mind, there will be no evil results such as fear and anger, which will vanish automatically. The Lord says that a person established in understanding or wisdom will take things as they come and will not have any likes and dislikes. Neither will he hug the world nor hate it, but his senses will be withdrawn like the tortoise withdrawing its limbs. By being conscious of the presence of God in all, one can control the senses. Krishna compares the uncontrolled mind to a boat caught up in storm. Due to the wind of desires blowing over the mind, it is tossed about and is induced to do wrong actions. The dark night

of an ordinary man is the condition of wakefulness to the self-controlled one, and vice versa. All the particularities merge in the universal Selfhood of a stable-minded sage. The sage of steady wisdom lives a life of disinterested service.

The Sankhya explained in this chapter contains the basic principles of the six systems of Indian Philosophy, and the Yoga of the Bhagavadgita teaches humanity its applicability in daily life. Here, the Lord gives a comprehensive knowledge of life by understanding which all human sufferings could be relieved in the awareness of the Absolute.

In this chapter the Lord shows humanity the way to get over duality and overcome conflicts in a scientific manner. He asks us to 'be a witness,' 'be free from the three Gunas (Nature)', 'live above duality', —without the 'I'-consciousness, 'act without expectation of result', 'identify our-

selves with Supreme Consciousness and act', etc. He also removes the wrong notion of people by giving the example of the characters of a realised person, 'Sthitaprajna', and presents the technique of liberation, which will be possible in all grades and stages of evolution.

Thus ends the 2nd chapter entitled 'The Sankhya Yoga'.

CHAPTER III

In the previous chapter Krishna advised that action done with evenness of mind is Yoga of wisdom. Action performed with expectation of its result is far inferior to the Yoga of wisdom (Buddhi Yoga). Arjuna failed to grasp the meaning and mistook the words '*Buddhi*' and '*Karma*' as representing the path of knowledge and of action respectively and asked Krishna if he considered knowledge as superior to action and if so why he is urged to do this dreadful act (war). By what can one attain the highest good? Krishna explains in a detailed manner that Karma Yoga should be performed by a combination of *Vidya* and *Avidya*. Vidya is consciousness with ego. Avidya is egoless but ignorant. Combination of the good of both, i.e., consciousness with egolessness is called Karma Yoga. Krishna explained the two paths,—San-

khya and Karma Yoga—in the previous chapter. He now gives the details of Karma Yoga and its practical applicability in daily life. One cannot attain perfection by renunciation of actions because one's mind will work secretly within. No one can ever remain quiet because of the qualities of Prakriti, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas which rule every object in the world, including one's body, mind and intellect. One who sits renouncing the actions by restraint of organs externally but thinking inwardly, which is invisible to others, is a hypocrite. On the other hand, one who contemplates on the Atman inwardly and does actions outwardly without expecting their result is a Karma Yogi. One cannot maintain one's body with inaction because breathing, seeing, hearing, digestion, and the like come under action. Krishna asks Arjuna to do his duty without identifying himself as doer. The world itself is bound by action. Action

performed without selfish motive is sacrifice. If one performs action with this attitude of sacrifice, the heart will be purified and this will lead to God-realisation. Krishna therefore asks Arjuna to perform his duty as a sacrifice without any motive.

Karma Yoga is a purposeful action animated by a universal motive. One should perform duty as worship of God. When action is done as a worship, based on understanding, it becomes *Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga* and *Jnana Yoga* all at once. So, for the sake of universal sacrifice, one should do one's duty, like the rain, the sun and the trees. Krishna quotes the example of king Janaka and others who attained perfection by action. Here the Lord reminds Arjuna of his responsibility to lead the other warriors because all have been depending on his courage and mastery of weapons. Krishna reveals to Arjuna the secret of motiveless action without expecting any-

thing from the three worlds. Here Krishna states that he is aware of everything in the three worlds. He has also the capacity to study the mind of Arjuna. Krishna indirectly condemns the hypocritical attitude of Arjuna. For the easy understanding of Arjuna, Krishna quotes his position and attitude in the war. He says that a wise man should in no way deter men from the performance of their duty by renouncing action himself or instructing them to do so. By personal guidance and example, one should lead others. If guided wisely, the entire world will follow the wise. Again, condemning the mental attitude of Arjuna about his feeling of 'doership', Krishna says that in every action the qualities of Prakriti act on the qualities as objects outside,—which is, after all, the secret of action.

The human body is a product of Prakriti. Due to predominance of Sattva one

is able to discriminate between right and wrong actions. One can also become a witness of all the *Gunas* of Prakriti. Due to predominance of Rajas one identifies oneself with the body, and acts and feels that he is the doer, which leads to Samsara (bondage). Due to predominance of Tamas one becomes ignorant, motionless and sleeps. The wise man, knowing that the Gunas as the senses within move with Gunas as the objects outside, withdraws the senses from objects and contemplates on the Self. Krishna gives out a practical method to act after surrendering to God everything, in thought, word and deed, and feeling the body as an instrument of God. If one fails to do one's duty, it would lead to one's destruction. Attachment and aversion for the objects of sense are due to ignorance. One can overcome these by discrimination and self-surrender. Explaining the qualities of the human being, Krishna asks Arjuna to fight

rather than renounce duty. Even though there may be dangers or obstacles on the path of duty, one must perform it with diligence. Even if death occurs in this process, it will only bring blessedness. Performance of one's duty is better than doing another's duty which may bring fame, power and position but which in turn will bring fear, restlessness and suffering.

Arjuna requests Krishna why it is that one mostly acts against one's good and what makes one do sinful actions. Krishna points out that by desire man is impelled to do evil actions against his own will. The seat of desire is in the mind, intellect and senses. Desire covers the knowledge of man as fire is covered by smoke, mirror by dust, or embryo by the amnion. The human being seeks happiness. But, because of Rajasic desire and ignorance he tries to get it through the senses, and this, as a

result, leads him to the path of sinful action and destruction. The senses, like wild horses, drag the chariot of the body in the wrong direction. The senses are said to be greater than the body; greater than the senses is mind. Intellect is greater than mind. Greater than the intellect is the Atman. Thus, having understood that the Indweller of the body is Pure Consciousness(Atman) which is beyond body, senses, mind and intellect, which is separate from activity, Lord Krishna says that the seats of desires are the senses, mind and intellect. He asks Arjuna not to identify the mind and intellect with the Pure Being (Atman). He holds that this is the only way to be free from desire. Due to ignorance one becomes a slave to desire, fulfils it through the sense-organs and fails to realise the reality of Self within. By adopting the middle path in Yogic practices, witnessing the mental modifications through

daily introspection, with the practice of meditation, one can realise the Self by the guidance of Guru and by God's Grace.

This chapter teaches humanity that it is impossible to live without action and all actions should be performed according to the rule: *'Yogasthah Kuru'*,—(Established in Yoga, act), stated in the previous chapter. The Lord quotes king Janaka as an example to follow. 'Karma' is the field of action and diversity, and 'Yoga' is unity with the divine even while being in the field of diversity. One should be aware of the source of the energy and then perform action. All human problems arise when the mind is extroverted through its immediate agents viz., the senses. The mind seeks happiness which is its real nature. Due to lack of understanding it tries to derive happiness through the senses and goes out to objects. Instead, when the mind is drawn back to its source, which is the Sup-

reme Consciousness, it begins to experience inexpressible happiness. Man without thoughts (individual consciousness) is God, and God with individual consciousness becomes man.

The Lord asks us to go beyond the three Gunas,—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas and be aware of the functions of the intellect, mind and senses. The seat of desires is up to the intellectual level. When the intellect and mind merge with the consciousness within, the desires lose their strength spontaneously, like a wave merging in the ocean.

Thus ends the Third chapter entitled 'Karma Yoga'.

CHAPTER IV

After stating the details of Karma Yoga to be practised in daily life, Lord Krishna says that he taught this immortal Yoga to the Sun. Then it was handed down to the solar dynasty in the descending order viz., Manu, Ikshvaku, etc. These royal sages practised and preached this Yoga to humanity. Later, due to lack of such stalwarts, this Yoga lost its importance in public life. Because of his omniscience Krishna knows the past, present and future, whereas Arjuna due to individual consciousness forgot his past. Krishna reveals the secret of his birth. He says by Yoga-Maya (Divine Power) he takes birth to protect righteousness and destroy wickedness and to keep Nature under control. God descends as an incarnation to raise humanity to Godhood, by his personal example. On seeing Arjuna's

purity of heart, surrender of thought, word and deed, and eagerness to realise Truth, Krishna teaches him the secret of Yoga. The Lord says that according to the desires of humanity he fulfils their needs with impartiality. In the process of evolution, the desires of humanity differ according to the grades of their temperaments. He created the fourfold caste on the basis of qualities and actions. One who possesses self-restraint, purity, straightforwardness, serenity, knowledge of scriptures as also teaches others, is called a Brahmana. In him Sattva predominates. One who possesses prowess, splendour, firmness in action, dexterity, generosity, ruling capacity, predominated by Rajas, is called a Kshatriya. One who does ploughing, protecting of cattle and trade, has Rajas predominating in him and Tamas is subordinate to Rajas. He is called a Vaisya. He, in whom Tamas predominates and Rajas is subordinate to Tamas, does

service to the other three categories, and is called a Sudra. Lord Krishna says that anyone according to his temperament can perform duty without expectation of result and reach Him i.e., attain God-realisation. One who has the knowledge of Brahman is called a Brahmana. Caste is not a family tradition or a birthright.

Krishna, after indicating the purpose of incarnation and desireless existence, asks Arjuna to do action without expectation of fruit. Through Karma Yoga one can be free from all bondage. He says that ancient seekers of liberation have performed such selfless service and asks Arjuna also to perform the same and not try to renounce his duty through attachment or fear.

Krishna himself says that it is very difficult to decide one's own duty. To perform one's duty one must know what to do, what not to do and how to do. In the previous chapter he said that no one can sit

quiet without performing action. Here he says that one must know action in inaction and inaction in action. Action means activities performed by body, senses, mind and intellect. If action is performed according to rule, and one's own order in society, without expecting result, without attachment, without the feeling of possession and egoism, then it is considered as inaction in action. He is really wise among men and Yogis.

Generally, inaction means renouncing all activities of the body. One who renounces external activities and poses as a renunciate, for the sake of fame and name, will reap sin and bondage. If one sits quiet without performing any action through the body but goes on performing actions through the mind, he is still considered to be doing actions, i.e., there is action in inaction. He who knows this secret will not renounce duties pertaining to his order

in society or stage in life for fear of physical discomfort.

One who does inner contemplation on the Supreme Self and performs actions with understanding for the good of the world, without any selfish motive, without expectation of its result,—the wise call him the knower of inaction in action, a sage, etc. Through this, all sins will get burnt up and one will become free from bondage, even of birth and death. He never expects anything from the world and is happy always. He takes things as they come. He is performer of all the sacrifices prescribed in the scriptures. He is the knower of knowledge, or Brahman.

Krishna, in the IInd chapter, said that Atman or Brahman is all-pervading. One who feels the presence of Brahman in every action, will feel that Brahman is the actor, action and also result of action. This is called knowledge-sacrifice. Krishna de-

tails various forms of sacrifices such as study of scriptures, sense-control, breath-control, charity, etc. All these sacrifices involve the action of body, mind and senses. One who fails to perform these sacrifices will not be happy either materially or spiritually. One can be happy materially through performance of sacrifice like charity, pouring of sacred articles like ghee, rice, etc., to the repetition of Mantras, into the sacred fire, with expectation of fruit. Sacrifice through knowledge, i.e., without expectation of result, is superior to action without knowledge. If these sacrifices are performed with knowledge (i.e., without motive), this knowledge will burn all sins, like fire turning the wood into ashes. Lord Krishna says that this knowledge can be obtained through sincerity, purity of heart, service to God-realised (*Brahma Nishtha*) Guru with devotion, prolonged practice of Karma Yoga and sense-control. Lord Kri-

shna says that real knowledge is the awareness of the Self or Being (Pure Consciousness within). This Pure Consciousness will be experienced by the aspirant only after a protracted period of practice in deep meditation. For this, one must have immense faith in God, belief in the preceptor, patience and devotion accompanied with a withdrawal of the senses from the objects of the world, with effort. Krishna says that then alone will one have supreme peace. The ignorant one, due to lack of these characters, entertains doubts in himself as well as in others, and suffers here as well as hereafter. But him who meditates with understanding with actions renounced spontaneously, without any effort, nothing in the world can bind. Lord Krishna asks Arjuna to do Karma Yoga through which all his ancestors achieved supreme happiness, which is the goal of human life.

In this chapter the Lord teaches that one must be aware that the Self is uninvolved or detached both in action and in inaction. Thus the state of renunciation or detachment is natural in the cosmic as well as individual state of consciousness. In the state of cosmic level, the Almighty Lord stands apart as a witness during the creation of the universe, its preservation and destruction. In the individual the Self stands as a witness during waking, dreaming and in deep sleep states. Even in the waking state of an individual all the limbs of the body act without any expectation for their own sake. For example, the stomach digests food not for its sake, eyes perceive objects, legs walk, hands grasp, etc., to help the whole body. Thus the spirit of renunciation is a natural state at all levels. The parts of the body act for the sake of the consciousness within. The Lord says that whoever acts and lives with this

awareness is a true performer of all actions and wise among men, not bound by actions.

This chapter is also called Jnana Yoga, Abhyasa Yoga and Jnana-Karma-Sannyasa Yoga, because it teaches humanity to remove all doubts about the Supreme Reality by the knowledge of Sankhya and to act in accordance with the teachings of Karma Yoga.

Thus ends the Fourth Chapter entitled 'The Yoga of the Division of Wisdom.'

CHAPTER V

Arjuna asks Krishna whether renunciation of action (Sankhya Yoga) or performance of action (Karma Yoga) is better for him. Krishna says that renunciation of work as well as its unselfish performance will both lead to supreme bliss. He also says that Karma Yoga is easier to practise. A Karma Yogi has the renunciate spirit at all times, because he performs his duty with detached spirit. The ignorant alone thinks that Karma Yoga and Sankhya Yoga are separate. In fact, both are inseparable from each other and both lead to the goal. Praising the Karma Yogi, Krishna says that the latter, due to his detached spirit, lives in the world without bondage like water on the lotus-leaf. A Sankhya Yogi who is established in the Self happily, even though he has renounced actions, does not identify

himself with such activities as seeing, hearing, touching, smelling etc., but is a witness of these functions of the body, senses, Pranas, mind and intellect.

Describing the Sankhya Yoga, the Lord says that the indiviual soul is a combination of Purusha and Prakriti. The Purusha (Lord) never acts nor presses anyone to do actions. It is Prakriti that does everything. This Purusha (Knowledge) is enveloped by Prakriti (through the three Gunas viz., Sattva, Rajas and Tamas). Man is bound when he identifies himself with Prakriti, i.e., body, mind and intellect. When he identifies himself with the Purusha, by constant meditation, he will be freed from bondage. His intellect is absorbed in Brahman, and is identified with Brahman. When the intellect is rested in Brahman, then all its subordinates, viz., body, mind and senses will see only Brahman outside in the world of Prakriti. He will see Brahman in a dog, man, ele-

phant, tree and all visible and invisible objects. When one is established in good thoughts, he will see good and do good to others, and hence he is free from blemish and knows no distinction between good and evil. For the knower of Truth there are no likes and dislikes, and he identifies himself with Brahman. He is a witness of every activity of Nature, including his own activities. His mind is always fixed on the Self, and experiences eternal happiness. The wise man, knowing this, never enjoys happiness through his senses, for their contacts have a beginning and an end, and they are veritable sources of pain. One who controls lust and anger etc., which are the products of desire, and sublimates Rajas into Sattva, and gradually empties the mind, is called a Yogi. Identifying himself with the Self, such a Yogi, even before casting off his body, becomes a perfected sage. The sage or Yogi who enjoys happiness and delight

of the soul within, illumined by the inner light, identifying himself with Brahman, attains Brahman which gives eternal peace. The scriptures say that with the realisation of God who is the cause of the universe and the universe itself, the knot of ignorance in the heart is loosened and all doubts are cleared.

After explaining the details of Karma Yoga and Sankhya Yoga, Lord Krishna assures Arjuna that both will lead to the realisation of God. Now, he states that Dhyana Yoga or the path of meditation is also an auxiliary for the disciplines of both Karma Yoga and Sankhya Yoga. In Dhyana Yoga one fixes the thought on the midpoint between the two eyebrows. One must make the breath rhythmical. Then the mind becomes steady and one-pointed. Through one-pointed mind, one can think continuously of God. Thus, by the practice of Karma Yoga, control of mind through concentration and

by rhythmical breathing, with the knowledge that God is the ultimate enjoyer of all sacrifices and austerities, the mortal becomes immortal and attains supreme peace. In the next chapter, Krishna expatiates on Dhyana Yoga. If one practises Karma Yoga, all other essential Yogas are simultaneously practised, viz., Sankhya Yoga, Dhyana Yoga and Bhakti Yoga. The different Yogas are inseparable aids to each other and lead one to God-realisation.

This Chapter teaches that renunciation or the detached spirit is the fundamental principle of all Yogas. All beings experience an infinite joy in renunciation. In deep sleep everyone feels immense happiness when one really possesses nothing, thinks of nothing. Intellect, mind and senses cease to function *unconsciously* and go nearer to the Self. In this state, the king, beggar and the animal merge into the one consciousness without the least distinction

and renouncing all their unnatural superimpositons of personality. When one consciously renounces the activities of the senses, mind and intellect one will surely merge into one's essential nature of the Supreme Consciousness which is the Supreme Good and Supreme Happiness. Thus, the renunciation or loss of individuality becomes a means to supreme perfection. This is the glory of the wisdom of renunciation. The action done with freedom from individuality spontaneously unites one with Universality.

Thus ends the Fifth Chapter entitled 'The Yoga of Renunciation of Action.'

CHAPTER VI

In this chapter, Lord Krishna clears the doubt of Arjuna as to whether a Yogi and a Sannyasi are one and the same. The Lord says that everyone who wishes to become a Yogi or Sannyasi must perform his bounden duty. By performing one's duty, without expectation of its fruit one becomes a Yogi. By renouncing all worldly thoughts, by constantly remembering God, through study of scriptures, Japa, Kirtan and meditation one becomes a Sannyasi. By this process the mind and heart will be purified. When one controls the lower self by the higher Self, then, the mind, senses and body will be controlled. Then the Self becomes one's friend; otherwise, this same Self will stand in the position of one's enemy. He who controls his body, mind and senses can remain calm in pleasure and

pain, heat and cold, honour and dishonour. For him there is no friend or enemy and he feels no difference between gold and stone. Such is the stage of a perfected Yogi or saint. He sees God in everything. Such a Yogi who is self-controlled and free from all desires constantly engages his mind in meditation.

Krishna, after describing the prerequisites for Dhyana Yoga, explains to Arjuna the method of practice. One should spread one's seat like *Kusha* grass, deer-skin and a cloth one over the other, in a secluded and clean spot. Occupying that seat in a comfortable pose, holding the body, head and neck erect, he must make the mind one-pointed by concentration between the two eyebrows. Controlling the thoughts and senses he must practise meditation for the purification of the soul. With serenity of mind, fearlessness and vow of continence, he must think of the form of the Lord's

Presence between the two eyebrows, i.e., the spot of concentration. Thus one who concentrates always the Presence of the Lord will attain supreme peace or liberation.

Lord Krishna prescribes the disciplines for the Yogic student. The aspirant should adopt the middle path in daily activities, e.g., fixed Sattvic diet, sleeping and waking hours, Yogic breathing, Yogic exercises, Satsanga and Svadhyaya, etc. The mind must be made to rest in God like a lamp placed in a windless place. When the mind is restrained by practice of meditation, it realises the Self within. When the mind tastes such bliss that it will feel there is nothing else in the three worlds worth possessing, then, it will not be disturbed even by the bitterest sorrow of the world. Understanding that one can enjoy such happiness through practice of Yoga, one should practise the Sadhana (Yoga) throughout one's life with determination and with non-

depression of heart. Sadhana is a life-long process. Every hour, every minute, one should think of God. Whenever the mind, due to previous habits of Samskaras, strays away from the object of meditation, it should be repeatedly fixed back on that object, with effort. By such constant practice of meditation, the meditator and the meditated object will become one, and then one will enjoy the supreme bliss. The Yogi, with mind harmonised, will see the Self in all beings and all beings in the Self. Lord Krishna says: "He who sees Me everywhere and sees everything in Me, never becomes separated from Me, nor do I become separated from him." The Yogi or perfected saint will act as an instrument in the hands of God.

On hearing the words of Krishna about the glory of equal vision and equanimity of mind Arjuna says: "The mind is unsteady, turbulent, tenacious and powerful.

It is difficult to control it, like the wind." Arjuna wanted to know what happens to him who does not succeed in Yoga. Will he be deprived of both God-realisation and heavenly enjoyment? Krishna says that the mind can be controlled by dispassion and practice. The practitioner, who falls from the path of Yoga, will take birth in the family of the pious and wealthy, or of Yogis, and again strive to pursue the path of liberation. Krishna also says that he who is devoted to Him is the best among Yogis and asks Arjuna to become such a Yogi who is superior to ascetics, men of scriptural knowledge and those who perform sacrifices.

In this chapter, Lord Krishna teaches that meditation is the only means to attain God-consciousness in all the grades and stages of evolution of human beings. He also says that attaining God-consciousness is the purpose of all Yogas. In all methods

of spiritual practice (Yoga), the mind alone plays an important role. When the mind is diretced towards God, with a comprehensive understanding, then one's perception, attitude and desires for the world change automatically. "The objects of the senses turn away from him who is abstemious, but taste for objects persists. On beholding the Supreme, even this taste ceases." Thus, by experiencing God-consciousness, through continuous meditation, one perceives the Unity in diversity and all the desires come to an end.

Thus ends the Sixth Chapter entitled 'The Yoga of Meditation.'

CHAPTER VII

In the previous chapter Krishna asked Arjuna to become a devoted Yogi who is superior to everyone else. To give an integral knowledge of God, along with His attributes and glories, so as to enable one to practise the various methods of devotion and to fix the mind constantly on Him, Krishna tells Arjuna that He will reveal to him the knowledge of God. After knowing this, nothing more would remain to be known. Among thousands of men scarcely one strives for perfection, and of those who thus strive, only one perchance knows Him in truth, says Lord Krishna.

He first reveals the two Natures viz., *Apara* (lower) and *Para* (higher) Nature (Prakriti). The lower Nature is divided eightfold viz., Earth, Water, Fire, Air, Ether, Mind, Intellect and Egoism. And

the Higher Nature is the life-principle with which the entire universe is sustained. All beings are evolved from this twofold Nature and God is its source, for creation, preservation and destruction.

The Lord says that God Himself is the sole cause and ultimate support of the entire creation. The entire universe is the manifestation of God and is pervaded by God. Like a cluster of gems strung on a thread, this universe is strung on God. Krishna says, "I am the taste in the waters, I am the light in sun and moon, I am the syllable 'OM' in all the Vedas, sound in ether, and manliness in men." He declares to Arjuna that He is present in all the things in the universe, visible or invisible, and is the root-cause for the entire creation. Because of the veiling power of Maya the world fails to recognise His presence. Those who take refuge in Him alone can cross over this divine *Maya*. The Lord is not

visible to those who are deluded by the three Gunas,—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas,—and the pairs of opposites. *Maya* veils the understanding of worldly-minded people. *Maya* is the union of the three qualities of Nature. The ignorant whose knowledge is destroyed by illusion forget to worship God. They feel that the world and the visible objects are alone real. They follow the ways of demons and suffer through the series of births and deaths.

Four types of virtuous persons worship Him, viz., the man in distress, the seeker of knowledge, the seeker of wealth and the man of wisdom. Among these, the man of wisdom, whose devotion is single-minded, is the dearest to God. After many births, deaths and sufferings, one realises that the Eternal Krishna or the Supreme Self alone is real. Such a one is, indeed, very difficult to find in the world.

Certain types of devotees whose wis-

dom has been carried away by various desires prompted by their own nature worship other deities and follow the prescribed rites mentioned in the scriptures. All forms are the forms of the One Lord. According to one's individual temperament, faith and ideal of life, one obtains the fruit of one's worship. The result gained by these people of little understanding is finite, because they forget the omnipresence of the Lord and worship Him with their limited consciousness. The deity or object of worship is only a means to make the mind one-pointed, but one should not take this itself as the goal. By one-pointed mind one must continuously meditate on the chosen object. Gradually the thoughts will cease, and one will experience the all-pervasive consciousness of the Supreme Being. In this Consciousness, all names and forms, and the individuality, will cease, and only the Reality will remain. The Lord appears with

names and forms to remove the ignorance of beings, to divinise humanity and to make them reach perfection, which is their real nature.

Krishna says to Arjuna that He knows about all beings, whether of the past, present and future, but no one knows Him. By the delusion of pairs of opposites, *Raga* (attraction) and *Dvesha* (repulsion), pleasure and pain, heat and cold, happiness and misery, joy and sorrow, success and failure, honour and dishonour, born out of desire and hatred, all beings fall under the clutches of Maya. They forget the presence of the Lord, and suffer due to birth and death. Those who fully surrender themselves and take refuge in Him know His Integral Being, i.e., *Brahma, Adhyatma, Karma, Adhibhuta, Adhidaiva* and *Adhiyajna*. Krishna explains these in detail in the next chapter.

A human being who fails to know and remember God throughout his life will not

remember Him even at the time of death. If he repeats the name of the Lord or thinks about the Divine Personality, at the time of death, even then he will reach the Supreme Imperishable. But, unless one remembers the Lord throughout one's life, one will find it difficult to remember Him at the time of death.

This chapter teaches that God is the Cause of the function of three *Gunas,* viz., Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. Due to ignorance, all human beings are deluded and identify themselves with the products of these *Gunas*—mind, senses and body. The entire universe exists and is governed by the interplay of the three Gunas. God has given man the power of discrimination (intellect) with which he can go beyond the clutches of these *Gunas* (Nature) and realise their Cause (God). Lord Krishna says, devotion is the means to union with God, without one's identifying oneself with any

product of Nature viz., mind, senses and body. The aspirant should not be oblivious of the Supreme Consciousness which is like the string supporting the beads in a garland or necklace. Even in an individual all the limbs are moved and connected by a single consciousness. Similarly, the entire universe exists because of the all-pervasive consciousness of God. The Lord says that this Supreme Consciousness can be invoked through any means according to one's temperament and one can merge in and attain Supreme Happiness. Those who understand that sufferings arise from birth, disease, old age and death and realise that God alone is the Supreme Goal and the culmination of all human pursuits, and act with faith and wisdom attain Him and are not born again.

Thus ends the Seventh Chapter entitled 'The Yoga of Wisdom and Realisation.'

CHAPTER VIII

To know all the aspects of the divine manifestation of the Supreme Being, Arjuna asks Krishna to elucidate the technical and philosophical terms used by Him in the previous chapter. He asks seven questions. "What is Brahman, Adhyatma, Karma, Adhibhuta, Adhidaiva, Adhiyajna and how, at the time of death, art Thou to be known by the self-controlled one?"

Krishna replies that what is Supreme and indestructible is called *Brahman* or the Absolute. Brahman is imperishable, unchanging, all-pervading, self-existent, self-luminous and the supreme cause of all effects. One's own individual self (essential nature) or individual consciousness is called *Adhyatma*. It is that part of Supreme consciousness together with the limiting adjuncts, —time, space, name and form. The

creative *force*, which is the cause of existence, manifestation and sustenance of all beings as well as the universal creation is called *Karma*. It is the force by which the One God has become the many. All perishable things, i.e., the five elements of the universe with all its objects, all things that have a beginning and an end, the intellect, mind, senses and body, are called *Adhibhuta*. The Universal Soul or the Divine Intelligence has the form of the deities constituting Its limbs. God is the controller, lord and progenitor of all. He is the first person and *Sutratman*. He is the vital energy or life-force of the movable and immovable objects of the entire universe. Hence He is called *Adhidaiva*. The presiding Deity of all sacrifices and the witnessing consciousness of the body, i.e., who dwells in the body, is *Adhiyajna*.

In reply to the last question of Ar-

juna, Krishna says: "He who dies with his thought fixed on God will reach God alone. The last thought will determine one's next birth. Whatever object one thinks at the time of death, one will attain the very same object in one's next birth. Our past thoughts or desires determine our present birth and our present thoughts will determine our future lives. Scriptures say that at the time of death the mind and the Pranas, together with the accumulated desires, called the astral body or Jiva, will leave the physical body. Death is the separation of the soul (Jiva) from the physical body. Death occurs when the momentum that brought this body into existence ceases. But one cannot know when this will happen. Therefore no one can know the last moment of death. Hence, Krishna says that one should always remember God and then and then alone one will be able to think of the Lord at the time of death.

"When the mind and intellect are absorbed in Me, doubtlessly, you will come to Me alone." Lord Krishna emphasises the need to practise Yoga at all times. If one practises meditation throughout one's life, fixing the mind on God, God-consciousness or God-thought will remain steady at the time of death also, instead of the objects of the world. One should always meditate on the Seer, the Omniscient, the Supporter of all (i.e. the Consciousness by which the intellect, mind, senses and body function), subtler than subtle, the source of light with which the sun, moon and stars shine and which dispels the darkness of ignorance.

Generally, everyone forgets the source of one's existence and suffers, because of the disharmony in one's personality—the physical, vital and mental levels of one's being. Just as in the disturbed waters of a lake one cannot see the

pebbles at the bottom or the reflection of the sun, so also the Self that is underlying one's personality is not felt or realised due to this disharmony. Here Lord Krishna gives a method by the practice of which one can bring the needed harmony in one's personality and attain God-Consciousness. Krishna says that one should practise Yogic breathing (Pranayama) together with concentration of the mind in the space between the two eyebrows and with chanting of Om. For the practice of Pranayama one should sit in a comfortable pose keeping the spine and neck erect. This creates a harmony in the physical system with the regular flow of vital energy (Prana) in all parts of the body. In the waking state the seat of the mind is the Ajna Chakra i.e., the space between the two eyebrows. When one concentrates in this place, the senses and mind become calm. The repe-

tition of Om creates a harmony in the nervous system and the entire personality of the practitioner will feel the single consciousness, which will gradually lead to the experience of Supreme Consciousness. By the practice of Yoga, he who controls the senses, does Yogic breathing, meditates on God, repeats the symbol of Brahman, OM, at the time of death; such a Yogi will surely reach the Supreme Goal, from which he never returns to the mortal world. This means that one should ever be established in God-consciousness by a regular practice of such practices. Then alone is it possible to have divine consciousness at the time of death. The mortal world is the place of pain and is non-eternal, whereas those who attain God-consciousness will reach the highest perfection (Liberation).

The Supreme Lord, who creates the Universe with the preponderance of Rajas,

is called Brahma*; who sustains the Universe with the preponderance of Sattva is called Vishnu, and who dissolves the Universe by preponderance of Tamas is called Rudra. 4,32,00,00,000 human years make a *day* of Brahma. Brahma's life is one hundred years of such days. By performance of sacrifices or good deeds one may reach the abode of Brahma, but it is also governed by time, space and causation. After a long period, i.e., after enjoying the fruits of their good deeds, souls will again take birth in this world. Lord Krishna says, "Those people who know the day of Brahma which is of a duration of a thousand Yugas (ages) and the night which is also of a thousand Yugas' duration, they know the day and night. From the unmanifested all the manifested worlds proceed at the

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* *To be distinguished from 'Brahman' or the Absolute.*

coming of the 'day', at the coming of the 'night' (Pralaya) they dissolve into that alone which is called the unmanifested. The multitude of beings take birth and die during the day and the night of Brahma, but God alone stands apart as an Eternal witness. Therefore, those who remember and meditate on the Supreme Being, as the Eternal witness, at the time of death, will never take birth again, but will reach the Supreme itself, which is beyond space, time and causation.

Krishna explains to Arjuna how Yogis realise God at the time of death. Without God-realisation no one can escape birth and death. One cannot escape birth and death even though one may ascend upto the region of Brahma. Now, Krishna mentions about the two paths, the routes by which the souls of those who practise Yoga travel and return.

Yogis who depart during the time in

which the deities of Fire, Light and Day preside, in the bright fortnight and in the six months of the northern course of the sun (Uttarayana), will reach Brahma-Loka and then merge in the Supreme Being. They never return. This is called *Krama-Mukti* or the path of gradual liberation, called the *Uttara Marga* or *Devayana.*

Those who are ignorant, who have attachment to objects of the world, who perform sacrifices with expectation of fruits, who depart when the deities of Smoke and Night preside and during the dark fortnight and the six months of the southern course of the sun (Dakshinayana), will reach Chandra-Loka, (the heaven of the forefathers). After enjoyment of their meritorious deeds, these souls will take birth in this mortal world, again. This is called the path of darkness—*Dakshina Marga* or *Pitriyana.*

Krishna says to Arjuna, "A Yogi (an

aspirant in the path of Yoga) knowing these two paths, will never perform sacrifices, study of scriptures, charity with expectation of fruits. Because he understands that everything except God is pain-giving and transient. Hence he is always immersed in God-consciousness, and finally attains to the Supreme Primeval Abode."

In this chapter Lord Krishna describes the glory of human existence. Scriptures say that a soul, after passing eighty million four hundred thousand subhuman species, by the grace of God, will take a human birth. If one fails to avail the opportunity of attaining God and fully spends the life with the animalistic characters such as lust, greed and jealousy, Krishna warns that it is not possible to remember God at the time of death and that one may again take birth even in the subhuman species. That is why He emphasises that one should practise Yoga and meditation so

that even at the time of death God-thought alone will come instead of worldly attachments.

Thus ends the Eighth Chapter entitled 'The Yoga of Imperishable Brahman'.

CHAPTER IX

Observing that Arjuna was endowed with faith, that he was free from the fault-finding nature and was qualified to receive the sacred divine Knowledge, Krishna says that He will disclose the sovereign Knowledge and sovereign Secret known in direct experience. This Knowledge is imperishable, knowing which one will become free from the evil of worldly existence. The Lord says that due to lack of faith in this Knowledge (in its manifest and unmanifest aspects), people fail to reach God and suffer in the world.

Krishna says that all beings are pervaded by Him and dwell in His unmanifest form like the mighty wind moving everywhere, resting always in ether, but untouched by ether. Even though He is the Creator, Sustainer and destroyer of the world,

He stands as a witness, indifferent and unattached to these processes. The ignorant, i.e., those who have no idea of God, identify Him with Nature and during His incarnations to protect the Dharma, regard Him as a mortal being. They do not behold God in the Universe and have no knowledge of the Self which dwells within the body. They do not see the Unity in diversity. They forget to see the ocean below the waves. They run after transient objects and miss the eternal. They have no discrimination or right understanding.

The knowers of Truth see the Reality in externality, also. They feel a oneness with all. They chant God's Name always. They worship Him with the wisdom-sacrifice. They see the Formless one as distinct and manifold.

He explains to Arjuna His identity with the Universe. He says that He is the Father and Mother of the world. He is

the Dispenser of the fruits of action, the Grandfather of all, the one thing to be known, the syllable 'OM', and the three Vedas viz. Rik, Yajus and Saman. He is the medicinal herb and all the plants. He is the worshipper and the worshipped. He radiates heat from the sun and sends showers. He is being as well as non-being, immortality as well as death. The celestials, like the sun, moon and fire, are all parts of His body. He says that He is the sacrifice as well as the materials of the sacrifice. Those virtuous men who worship Him in manifested forms, as a result of merits acquired, after enjoying in heaven, will return to the mortal world, when the merits are exhausted.

The devotees who constantly think of and love Him alone, without any desires, to them God gives full security and He attends personally to their needs. The worshippers of other deities also worship Him by a

wrong understanding. They do not know that "I alone am the enjoyer and also the Lord of all sacrifices." So they return to the mortal world. Only the devotees of God who worship Him alone without motive reach Him. The lover of devotion is pleased with devotion alone and wants nothing else. Whoever offers to Him with love even water, a leaf, a flower or a fruit—He accepts it from such a devotee. God is not concerned with the quality of the article offered to Him by the devotee, for He watches only their motive and devotion. Even the vilest of sinners, if they worship Him with exclusive devotion, will be regarded as righteous, for they have rightly resolved. Krishna assures Arjuna: "My devotee, who has sincerely offered his soul to Me, will never perish. Whatever action you do in your daily life, like eating, drinking, reading, practice of austerity, offering in sacrifice, etc., do it as an offering to Me and not

with a selfish motive. Those who take refuge in Me will attain the Supreme Goal even though they may be low by caste. Not only royal sages, Brahmins, etc., but women, Vaisyas as well as Sudras, also, can attain the supreme Goal. So, Arjuna, fix your mind on Me, be devoted to Me, sacrifice unto Me, bow down to Me; having thus united yourself with Me, taking Me as the Supreme Goal, you shall come to Me."

In this chapter the Lord teaches to do every action as an offering to the Lord. All actions thus become a symbol of devotion and help remembrance of God. God is not in need of the objects of the world. He declares that all the worlds exist in Him but He does not dwell in them. The waves are in the ocean; but the ocean cannot be said to be in the waves. In this discourse Lord reveals the secret that nothing can exist apart from Him. He is both the manifested and unmanifested Reality of the

Universe. He who is aware of this secret of Reality and Existence, in all states and stages of life, will surely reach Him alone.

Thus ends the Ninth Chapter entitled 'The Yoga of Kingly Science and Kingly Secret.'

CHAPTER X

Knowing Arjuna's desire to hear of the most secret attributes, glory and truth of the Supreme Lord, Krishna, with affection, reveals the secret for the welfare and prosperity of Arjuna, and, incidentally, of all. He tells Arjuna that neither the gods nor sages know His origin because He is the source of all. He who knows that He is unborn and beginningless and the supreme Lord of the universe, he, among men, is undeluded and is liberated from all sins. From Him alone do all the different qualities of beings, viz., understanding, wisdom, non-illusion, patience, truthfulness, self-control, calmness, happiness, pain, birth, death, fear and fearlessness arise. The seven gerat sages, the ancient four, and also the Manus, invested with the power of the Lord, were born out of His mere Will,

and from them have all the creatures in the world descended. He who knows in truth these manifold manifestations and supernatural powers of the Lord, without doubt, gets established in Yoga. The wise ones, knowing that He is the Source of all, that everything in the world exists because of Him, with devotion worship Him, talk on Him, surrender themselves to Him, meditate on Him and rejoice in Him. Lord Krishna says that those who worship Him with devotion, to them He gives the Yoga of discrimination by which they shall reach Him. Krishna also says that, in order to shower His grace, He, dwelling in their Self, shall destroy the darkness of their ignorance by the shining lamp of wisdom.

On hearing these words of Krishna, Arjuna asks: "All the sages like Narada, Asita, Devala and Vyasa also have mentioned the same. I believe what you have told me to be the truth. Neither do the

Devas nor Danavas can know your origin. You alone know what you are. You alone can describe your divine glories, and how you pervade all these worlds. O Lord of Yoga, through what process of meditation shall I know you? In what aspects or things are you to be meditated upon? Krishna, tell me again, your manifestations and divine glory. I am thirsty to hear your nectar-like words." Lord Krishna says: "I am the universal Self seated in the hearts of all beings, I am the beginning, the middle and also the end of all beings. Among the twelve sons of Aditi I am Vishnu; of lights I am the radiant sun; I am Marichi among the (seven or forty-nine) Maruts; and moon among the stars. Among the Vedas I am the Sama-Veda, among gods I am Indra. Among organs of perception I am mind, and I am the consciousness in living beings. Among the eleven Rudras (gods of destruction) I am Siva; Among the Yakshas and Rakshasas

I am the lord of wealth (Kubera). Among the eight Vasus I am the god of fire and among the mountains I am the Meru. Among the household priests know Me to be their chief, Brihaspati. Among warrior-chiefs I am Skanda, and among the lakes I am the ocean. Among great sages I am Bhrigu; among words I am the one syllable 'OM'; among sacrifices I am the sacrifice of silent repetition of the Divine Name (Japa Yajna); and among immovable things I am the Himalayas. Among all trees I am the holy fig tree, 'Asvattha'; among divine seers I am Narada; among Gandharvas I am Chitraratha; among perfected ones I am the sage Kapila. Among horses I am the celestial horse, Ucchaihsravas; among mighty elephants I am Airavata (Indra's elephant); and among men I am the king; among weapons I am the thunderbolt; I am the celestial cow called Kamadhenu; I am the progenitor Kandarpa; and among serpents I am Vasuki. I am the

serpent-god Ananta; I am the deity of water, Varuna. I am the chief of the ancestors called Aryama; I am Yama among governors. I am Prahlada among Daityas; among reckoners I am Time; I am the lord of beasts, lion; among birds I am Garuda. Among purifiers I am the wind; among warriors I am Rama. Among the fishes I am the shark; among streams I am the Ganga. Arjuna, in short, I am the beginning, the middle and the end of all creation. Among sciences I am the science of the Self; and I am logic among controversialists. Among letters I am the first alphabet 'A', and the dual among all compounds in grammer. I am the imperishable time, and the creator whose face is turned on all sides. I am all-devouring death and the prosperity of those who are prosperous. Among the feminine qualities I am renown, prosperity, speech, memory, intelligence, firmness and forgiveness. Of hymns I am Brihatsaman; of

metres I am Gayatri; of months I am Margasirsha; and of seasons I am the flowery season (spring). I am the gambling of the fraudulent; I am the splendour of the splendid; I am the determination and goodness of the good. Among the Vrishnis I am Vasudeva; among the Pandavas I am Arjuna; among the sages I am Vyasa; and among poets I am the poet Ushanas (Sukracharya). I am the subduing power in rulers; I am the statesmanship of those who seek victory; among secrets I am silence; I am the wisdom of the wise. I am the seed of all beings. Nothing can exist without Me. There is no limit to my divine manifestations. I am supporting this entire universe by a fraction of My power."

In this chapter Arjuna requested Lord Krishna to explain His glories, His power of Yoga and the form to meditate upon. The Supreme Lord explains the technique for meditation. In meditation one will have

to take the mind from grosser to subtler levels of consciousness so as to reach its (mind's) source which is Pure Consciousness. The mind is always extroverted and depends upon sensory perception. When one is convinced, as described by the Lord, that in everything He alone exists as its essence (consciousness), then the mind will begin to perceive, even in the grosser level of sensory perception, the essence of the object, i.e., Consciousness, which is its own essential nature. The consciousness within begins to perceive the consciousness outside without any effort or obstacle. By this, the Lord teaches that one can be always in God-consciousness.

Thus ends the Tenth Chapter entitled 'The Yoga of the Divine Glories.'

CHAPTER XI

After hearing the secret of wisdom, divine manifestation and glory, Arjuna says that his delusion has gone. He expresses his desire to see the Divine Cosmic Form. He implores: "Krishna, if you think that it is possible for me to see Thy Form, show me Thy imperishable Self." On the request of His loving and faithful devotee, Lord Krishna says: "Behold, O Arjuna, My Divine Form, consisting of hundreds and thousands of forms with various colours and shapes. Behold the Adityas, the Vasus, the Rudras and many wonders, never seen before by ordinary people. Now, see in this Form of Mine the entire universe centred, including the moving and unmoving and whatever you want to see". On seeing Arjuna's incapacity to see that Divine Being with his physical eyes, Krishna bestows

on him divine vision.

Sanjaya, who was witnessing everything that had happened in the battle-field, describes to Dhritarashtra the Divine Form of Krishna, as seen by Arjuna.

Arjuna saw the whole universe with its manifold divisions within that Supreme Form. He saw faces turned everywhere, with thousands of limbs and stomachs, with numerous mouths, wearing garlands, ornaments, holding many uplifted weapons, etc. The sun and the moon formed its two principal eyes. The God shone as if there were thousands of suns in the sky. On seeing the wonderful Divine Form, worshipping it reverentially, Arjuna exclaims that he saw a boundless variety of natures on every side with manifold arms, stomachs, mouths and eyes, with neither beginning, middle nor end. He saw Brahma seated on the lotus, Siva and all sages, the eleven Rudras, twelve Adityas, eight Vasus, Sadhyas and

Visvadevas, the two Asvins, Maruts, Ushmapas and hosts of Gandharvas, Yakshas, Asuras and Siddhas, all astonishingly looking at Him. Sheets of fire rushed forth from His mouths. Due to the fearful nature of this Form with many teeth, all the worlds were terrified. On seeing the Divine Form shining in many colours, touching the sky with mouths wide open, all the Kauravas with the hosts of kings of the earth, that were assembled there, along with Bhishma, Drona and Karna, entered into His flaming mouths like rivers flowing into the ocean. Some were found sticking between His teeth, and were crushed to powder. As moths rush swiftly into the blazing fire for their destruction, likewise all these warriors hurriedly rushed into His fiery mouths, to perish there. He saw this Form of Lord Krishna swallowing them all with His blazing mouths and licking them up on all sides. His fierce rays filled the

whole Universe and scorched it with their fierce radiance. Arjuna asked: "Kindly tell me who you are, in this terrible form. I want to know the purpose for which you have taken this form." Bhagavan Krishna said: "I am the mighty world-destroying Time, now engaged in winding up the worlds. Even without your fighting, all those warriors arrayed on the enemy's side shall cease to exist. I have already killed Bhishma, Drona, Jayadratha, Karna and all other brave warriors who are standing on the enemy's side. I have already destroyed them; fight merely as an instrument, conquer the enemies and enjoy a prosperous kingdom."

Now Sanjaya describes Arjuna's condition, and his prayer to the Almighty.

Arjuna, trembling, bowed to Him with joined palms and addressed Him in a choking voice. "Your devotees are rejoic-

ing in the world by chanting Your names, attributes and glory, whereas the Rakshasas (the evil-minded) are fleeing in all directions with fear. All the hosts of Siddhas are bowing to You."

On seeing the Cosmic Form of Lord Krishna, Arjuna says: "O Supreme Soul! why can't they (the evil-minded) bow to Thee? Thou art greater than all; Thou art the primal cause of even the Creator Brahma. O Lord of the gods, the ultimate Resort of the universe, Thou art Imperishable, the Being and the non-being and what is beyond them. Thou art the first of all gods, the Primal Person, the supreme refuge of the universe, the knower, the knowable and the Supreme Abode. It is Thou who pervadest the universe assuming endless forms. Thou art Vayu (the wind-god), Yama (the god of death), Agni (the god of fire), Varuna (the god of water), Sasanka (the moon-god), Brahma (the lord of creation),

and Prapitamaha (the great-grandfather). Hail, Hail to Thee, Salutations unto Thee a thousand times, and again Salutations unto Thee. Salutations to Thee in front, behind, and on every side. O All, Thou infinite in power and prowess pervadest all; therefore Thou art all. Whatever I have said carelessly or presumptuously or in love, when alone or in company addressing Thee as thinking that Thou art my companion, 'O Krishna, O Yadava, O Comrade,' and unaware of Thy greatness, that I implore Thee, O Immeasurable One to forgive. Thou art the Father of this world, moving and unmoving. Thou art the object of worship in this world and Thou art the venerable teacher. None is equal to Thee; how can there be one greater than Thee in the three worlds, O Thou of incomparable greatness? Therefore, bowing down, prostrating my body, I crave Thy forgiveness O adorable Lord. As a father forgives his

son, a friend his (dear) friend, a lover his beloved, even so, shouldst Thou forgive me, O God. I have seen what was never seen before and I rejoice but my heart is shaken with fear. I wish to see Thee again in Thy four-armed form, with Thy radiant crown, mace and disc. I have no strength and courage to behold the Visvarupa (Cosmic form of Thine.'"

Lord Krishna says: "O Arjuna, this Supreme Form has been showed to you alone, by My Yoga-Power. No one has seen this Form upto this time, in this mortal world. This Cosmic Form cannot be seen through study of scriptures, rituals, charity, works or austere penances, but can be seen only by single-minded devotion."

Sanjaya said to Dhritarashtra that Sri Krishna consoled Arjuna by revealing His four-armed form again.

Krishna, after fulfilling the wish of Arjuna, tells him that this Form of His is

very difficult for others to perceive, and even gods are always eager to behold this Form. By study of Vedas, austerity, charity, penance or by sacrifice, etc., He cannot be seen. By concentrated devotion it is possible to know Him, behold Him and enter His Being. "He who performs all actions without motive, for My sake, regarding Me alone as supreme, devoted to Me, attached to nothing, and bears no enmity towards any creature,—such a person comes to Me, O Arjuna."

This Chapter reveals that the Cosmic form of God Almighty is not perceivable by the physical eyes. If one perceives the Cosmic Form before the mind is completely purified then he will get a tremendous shock as it happened to Arjuna. The Lord says that it is not to perceive Him merely by the study of scriptures, neither by austerity, nor by gift, nor by sacrifices practised generally by the seekers. The Lord establishes

here that He can be known only through single-minded devotion and can be experienced through a purified, innocent mind in deep meditation. Here again the Lord emphasises that practice of meditation, with faith and devotion to the Almighty is the only means to attain God-consciousness and to put an end to the ignorance of humanity. That is why sages say that God-realisation is the simplest and the easiest thing in the world, which can be attained by everybody in any stage of life. The requisite qualification is faith, single-minded devotion and constant meditation but not the titles and riches of the world.

Thus ends the Eleventh Chapter entitled "The Yoga of the Vision of the Cosmic Form".

CHAPTER XII

In the previous chapter, Lord Krishna declared to Arjuna that by exclusive devotion one can attain the goal of life, i.e., God-realisation. The Lord also explained the two modes of worship, viz., Manifest (Saguna—with form) and Unmanifest (Nirguna—without form). Arjuna now asks Sri Krishna as to which type of devotee is well-versed in Yoga.

Lord Krishna answers that those who fix their minds on Him always in His Universal Form with intense and supreme faith as the Lord of all, Master of Yoga, and who are free from all attachment and other evil passions, are the best ones in Yoga. Those who restrain all the senses, who are even-minded at all times, and devoted to the welfare of all beings, they also realise God. The Lord says that both types of devotees,—

those who worship Him with form and without form,—will reach Him. The unmanifest form of worship is difficult but the result will be quick. The worshipper of Nirguna Brahman (without form) should not have the least attachment even for his own body, from the very beginning. The Lord says: "Arjuna, you also fix your mind and intellect on Me (in the Cosmic Form); you will undoubtedly live in Me as Myself. If it is not possible, by constant practice of Yoga fix your mind on Me. Even if this practice also is not possible, do all your actions for My sake and be a witness of them. Then you will attain perfection. If you cannot perform actions for My sake, take refuge in Me and offer the fruits of action to Me." Lord Krishna suggests many methods in order to help Arjuna to practise any one of them and thus realise Him.

The Lord says that knowledge of Brahman is better than meditation, meditation

is better than theoretical knowledge, renunciation of desires is better than meditation. In meditation, there is a single-pointed continuous thought of the Supreme. Lord Krishna says that by the method of renunciation of desires one can attain Supreme Peace (Universal Consciousness).

Lord Krishna describes the marks of the devotees who possess such peace of mind and have realised God. He who hates no creature, who is friendly and compassionate to all, who is free from attachment and egoism, balanced in pleasure and pain, ever content, steady in meditation, self-controlled, with mind and intellect dedicated to God,—he is very dear to God. By whom the world is not agitated and who cannot be agitated by the world, who is free from joy, envy, fear and anxiety,—he is dear to God. Who is free from wants, is internally and externally pure, is skilful in every action, who has risen above all distractions,

who has given up all initiative in actions, —he is dear to God. Who is alike to both friend and foe, good and bad, honour and dishonour, heat and cold, and other contrary experiences, and who has full devotion to God,—he is dear to God. He who takes censure and praise alike, who is silent, content with any means of subsistence whatsoever, without least attachment or sense of ownership in respect of his dwelling place, fully absorbed in the practice of meditation, and full of devotion—he is dear to God.

Lord Krishna mentions the above description of a person who remains in God-consciousness and suggests to humanity to follow with faith the immortal Dharma with which the sages have attained the Supreme regarding Him—the Almighty—as the Supreme Goal, and says those who follow the Dharma are exceedingly dear to Him.

In this chapter the Lord teaches humanity to follow the Immortal Dharma. Dharma is that which leads one nearer to God. When people follow and encourage negative forces (Adharma) it will lead to suffering. If they follow the righteous way—the Dharma (positive forces)—it will keep the whole stream of life in harmony. Every aspect of life will be balanced with every other aspect in the process of evolution towards Godhood (Supreme Happiness). When the positive forces are invoked in one's life, one will derive immense happiness both in the material and spiritual fields; because they create harmony within and without. In order that the God-vision, which at first comes as a glimpse and goes (as it came and went in the case of Arjuna in the previous chapter) may become a perpetual experience, a definite practice is prescribed in this chapter which may be called the four types of spiritual endeavour,—Jna-

na, Yoga, Bhakti and Karma. When through the technique of integral Yoga the vision is perpetuated, one becomes a real Bhagavad-Bhakta as described in this chapter.

Thus ends the Twelfth Chapter entitled 'Yoga of Devotion.'

CHAPTER XIII

Lord Krishna explained in detail Karma Yoga in the first six chapters and Bhakti Yoga from then upto the twelfth chapter. In the last six chapters, He gives the details of Jnana Yoga. From the thirteenth chapter onwards the Lord deals with the most philosophical teachings and enters into a new type of discussion which is immensely practical and profoundly metaphysical. Upto the end of the twelfth chapter, the discussions are spiritual, psychological and moral, in nature; and according to a particular classification, the twelfth chapter concludes the gospel on the nature of God. Generally, commentators of the Bhagavad Gita divide the eighteen chapters into three groups of six chapters each. The first six chapters contain teachings pertaining to the individual soul or the Jiva, and its relation

to God, the Almighty. In the next six chapters (i.e., chapters seven to twelve), the path to perfection or the way of union of the Jiva (individual consciousness) with Ishvara (Universal Consciousness) is dealt with. The harmony of the teachings between the first and the second groups is supposed to be discussed in the last six chapters commencing with the thirteenth.

By a sudden shift of emphasis Sri Krishna introduces, in this chapter, a teaching which is directly pertinent to the nature at once of the individual and the Supreme. In this discourse, there is reference to both the individual and the Supreme at one and the same time referring as it does to the threefold relation of the knower, knowledge and the known. The knower and the object known are lingered by a knowledge. The nature of this threefold relation, viz., that of the knower, knowledge and the known, is the main subject of this chapter. Now

introducing the subject of the knower or the cognizer, the repository of knowledge, Lord Sri Krishna commences His teachings from the immediate reality that is presented to the senses, viz., the physical body. The teaching raises in tempo step by step from the lowest until the highest is discussed in certain verses of this chapter.

In the previous chapter, Arjuna asked the Lord about the comparative merit of the worshippers of God with attributes on the one hand and the worshippers of God without attributes on the other. But the Lord replied to only one part of the query and hence Arjuna repeats the latter half of the question.

Arjuna asks: "O Kesava, I should like to know about *Prakriti* (Matter or Nature), *Purusha* (Spirit), *Kshetra* (the field), *Kshetrajna* (Knower of the field), Knowledge and the object of knowledge.

Lord Krishna says that the body is called *Kshetra* (the field where pleasure and pain are experienced through the physical, mental and causal bodies). He who beholds the Kshetra (body) as distinct from himself, through knowledge, is called *Kshetrajna* (oversoul). He is the (indwelling spirit) silent witness of all fields; and not an object in the world. Knowledge of Kshetra and Kshetrajna (i.e., of Matter with its evolutes and the Spirit) is called Supreme Wisdom. In order to evoke a greater interest in Arjuna, the Lord expresses His regard for the Sages, the Vedas and Brahmasutras, by quoting their authority on the subject. He says that sages have sung in many ways, in various distinctive chants and also in the suggestive words indicative of the Absolute, full of reasoning and decisive, about that wisdom. They have declared that the five gross elements, ego, intellect, the unmanifested (Mula-Prakriti), the ten organs of

perception and action, mind, the five objects of sense, desire, hatred, pleasure, pain, the physical body, individual consciousness and firmness are the modifications of the Kshetra (the field), and this is the individual *Knower*.

Now Krishna describes the virtues which lead to spiritual realisation—what may be called true Knowledge (Spiritual Wisdom). Humility (absence of pride), integrity (absence of deceit), non-injury, forgiveness, uprightness, service to the preceptor, purity, fortitude, self-control, indifference to the objects of sense, absence of pride, reflection on the evils of birth, death, sickness and old age, non-attachment, non-identification with the body, wife and son, home and the like, equal-mindedness towards the desirable and undesirable happenings, etc., unflinching devotion to God, with exclusive concentration, resorting to solitary places, distaste for the society of

men, constancy in Self-knowledge, perception of the end of true knowledge,—these are declared to be true knowledge (wisdom) and all that is different from these is ignorance. All the virtues mentioned above should come to a seeker through understanding, self-analysis or by Self-awareness, and they should not be practised with a double personality.

Krishna then describes the Purusha (Spirit) knowing which one attains immortality, the thing to be *known*. That Supreme Brahman (Purusha) is beginningless, is said to be neither *Sat* (being) nor *Asat* (non-being). It has hands and feet everywhere, has eyes, ears, heads and mouths everywhere and It pervades all the universe. It appears to have the qualities of all the senses and yet without the senses. It is unattached, supports all, and is free from the three modes of Prakriti (*Gunas*—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas), and yet enjoys them. It

exists within and without all beings. It is unmoving and also moving. It is too subtle to be known. It is far away and yet It is near. It is undivided and yet It exists as if divided in beings. It is the Creator, Sustainer and Destroyer of all beings. It is the Light of all lights, and is beyond darkness. It is the knowledge, the knowable, the goal of knowledge, seated in the hearts of all. Thus Lord Krishna briefly describes the field as well as the Knowledge and the object of Knowledge, and says: "My devotee who understands thus becomes worthy of My State."

At first Lord Krishna invited Arjuna to hear Kshetra and Kshetrajna and Knowledge. Then after describing in detail about the true nature of Kshetra and its evolutes, He incidentally enumerated the virtues of the seeker on the spiritual path, aware of which one becomes wise. He, also discussed the true nature of the Purusha (Su-

preme God) who is the only object to be known.

Now Lord Krishna describes the relation between Prakriti and Purusha according to the Sankhya philosophy. Prakriti and Purusha (Matter and Spirit) are the Natures of Isvara and hence these two are beginningless. All modifications or qualities are born of Prakriti. The body and senses are produced by Prakriti and the experience of pleasure and pain is by Purusha (individual soul—Jiva) due to its identification with Prakriti. Purusha seated in Prakriti (body born out of Nature) experiences the qualities (Gunas) born out of Nature. Attachment to the qualities of Nature causes birth in good and evil wombs. The spirit dwelling in the body is the same as the Supreme Spirit which is the witness of everything, the supporter, the experiencer, the Great Lord and the Self of all. He who knows this secret, the Soul (Purusha)

and Nature (Prakriti) with its Gunas, though he acts, is not born again. Because, the actor will be aware of the consciousness which is beyond action and will be always merged in Bliss-consciousness.

Krishna describes that there are several methods to attain the knowledge of the Self (awareness of the Supreme Consciousness). The seat of the individual consciousness (mind) or 'I' consciousness is the heart. Some by deep meditation behold the Supreme Spirit (Consciousness) by consciously putting an end to the functions of the mind and intellect; others by the path of knowledge (Sankhya Yoga), i.e., by becoming a witness to the functions of body, senses, mind and intellect with an understanding that all these are products of Prakriti (Nature) whereas the Purusha is actionless, and thus identify the individual consciousness with the Supreme Consciousness. Some others behold the Supreme Spirit by the

path of action (Karma Yoga), viz., performing the bounden duty in any stage or grade of evolution with a detached spirit, and attain liberation. Those who are not aware of these methods and perform worship with devotion, with the help of scriptures and preceptors, lead a divine life by being good and doing good to others, at all times, without the least distinction, they also reach the Supreme.

Krishna says that whatever exists, whether moving or unmoving, is brought about by the union of Purusha and Prakriti (Spirit and Matter). The knower of Truth perceives the Supreme Being (Consciousness) existing equally in all beings. This Being (consciousness) never perishes when they (objects) perish. Such a devotee never injures others, knowing that his own Self (consciousness) is all-pervading, actionless and that all actions are done by Prakriti alone. Thus, when one perceives that the

manifold states of beings are centred in the One (Supreme Consciousness), then he attains Brahman, i.e., merges into That Supreme Consciousness. "Arjuna", says the Lord, "Because this Supreme Self (Consciousness) is imperishable,—without beginning, end and qualities,—though It dwells in the body, It neither acts nor gets contaminated." Just as the ether pervading earth, water, fire and air, is not affected by their qualities, so also the Self (Purusha) dwelling in the body (Prakriti) is not affected by its qualities. As the one sun illumines the whole Universe, the Atman (Spirit) illumines the whole field (Kshetra). Those who perceive that there is this essential difference between Kshetra and Kshetrajna, through wisdom, and that all are born from Nature (Prakriti), reach the Supreme Spirit.

In this chapter Lord Krishna teaches humanity to be a witness, with a discrimi-

native understanding that everything in the universe is a product of Prakriti (Nature) and Self or Pure Consciousness, which is one's own real essence or destiny. One should not identify oneself with the functions of one's intellect, mind, senses and body. One should not contaminate one's real nature (consciousness) with the products of Prakriti, like the rain-water which, after falling on and mixing with the earth, becomes muddy.

Thus ends the Thirteenth Chapter entitled 'The Yoga of the distinction between the field and the knower of the field.'

CHAPTER XIV

In this chapter, Lord Krishna describes the qualities (Gunas) of Nature (Prakriti), —how they bind man, their characteristics, how they operate, how one can obtain freedom from them and the characteristics of those who have attained such freedom.

In the previous chapters, Lord Krishna said that Purusha and Prakriti emanated from the Supreme Lord simultaneously, and hence they are eternal. Here He explains the creation of the Universe in a manner that can be understood by the human mind. The primordial Nature is the great Brahma (Mula-Prakriti), the womb of all creatures, in which He places the seed of all life. The creation of all beings follows from that union of Prakriti and Purusha (Matter and Spirit).

The Lord says that Sattva (purity),

Rajas (passion) and Tamas (inertia) are the three qualities of Nature, which tie down the soul to the body. Of these, Sattva (goodness) being pure, causes illumination and health. It binds the soul to the body by association with happpiness and to knowledge. Rajas (passion), born of cupidity and attachment, binds the soul by association with actions and their fruits. Tamas (dullness) is born of ignorance and deludes all embodied beings. It binds the soul tc the body by developing the qualities of negligence, indolence and sleep.

Tamas (dullness) prevails by having overpowered Rajas and Sattva. Rajas (passion) prevails by overpowering Tamas and Sattva. Sattva (goodness) prevails by overpowering Rajas and Tamas. When the light of knowledge streams forth in the mind and senses, then one should know that Sattva is predominant. When greed, activity, the undertaking of actions, restless-

ness and longing for objects arise, it should be known that Rajas predominates. Unillumination (darkness), inactivity, negligence and delusion arise when Tamas predominates.

Lord Krishna says that when one meets death during the predominance of Sattva, one obtains the stainless ethereal world (heaven) which is attained by men of noble deeds. When one dies during the predominance of Rajas, one takes birth among those attached to action. When one dies during the predominance of Tamas, one is born in the wombs of the senseless (such as stupid persons, insects and beasts, etc.).

Lord Krishna teaches that by the discriminating capacity, one can be established in Sattva Guna with good deeds, rejecting Tamas and Rajas. For this, one must do selfless service, have Satsanga (company of the wise), do Svadhyaya (study of scriptures), repeat the Lord's Name, and prac-

tise meditation. Finally, one must discard Sattva Guna also by single-minded devotion to God. When the embodied soul rises above the three Gunas that spring from Prakriti, it is freed from birth, death, old age and pain, and attains immortality.

To the question of Arjuna as to how one goes beyond these Gunas and what are the marks of the person who has risen above the three Gunas, Lord Krishna says that he who serves God with unswerving devotion crosses beyond the Gunas and also becomes one with Him. Such a liberated sage does not hate noble activities born of Sattva, actions born of Rajas and of delusive Tamas, when they come, nor long for them when they cease. Having established identity with God, he sits like a witness, knowing that the Gunas alone move among Gunas. He treats all alike, whether friend or enemy, stone or gold, honour or dishonour, and renounces the sense of doership and acts as

an instrument in the hands of the Almighty, and well becomes eligible of attaining Brahman or God-Consciousness).

In this chapter Lord Krishna teaches humanity the. essential character of the three Gunas and how to get over from their clutches. He also explains that through undivided love towards God, meditation, selfless work, etc., one can become a Gunatita and transcend the qualities of Nature. The Lord also explains the character of those who have experienced the Supreme Consciousness and the technique to become one with that Supreme Consciousness.

Thus ends the Fourteenth Chapter entitled 'The Yoga of the Division of the Three Gunas.'

CHAPTER XV

In order to have unswerving devotion to God, Lord Krishna once again describes the Divine attributes. He says that one can transcend the Gunas through dispassion and self-surrender. He compares the entire creation to a *peepul* tree with its roots fixed in the Supreme Lord, and its stem representing Brahma (creator of the Universe) and leaves the Vedas (hymns glorifying the Lord and the creation of Universe). It is also said that the human body is like a tree. The root above is the cerebro-spinal nervous system (brain).The various nerves are the branches that ramify downwards to the various organs all over the body. The tree is fed by the three Gunas, the sense-objects are its tender branches and buds spreading up and down by the roots of actions. This tree of bondage

(body-consciousness or individuality) can be cut by the sword of non-attachment. Then will one be freed from pride, doership, delusion, and be liberated from the dualities of pleasure and pain. One attains then the eternal state. Krishna says that this Supreme state is illumined by Itself and not by the sun, moon, stars or fire, which are all illumined by a fraction of Its being. The wise ones, having cut their ego with the sword of dispassion and knowledge, never return to the mortal world.

Now Krishna describes the birth of an individual soul in the mortal world. A fraction of His own Supreme Being becomes a living soul (Jivatma) in the world of life, which draws to itself the mind and five senses and rests in the body. After fulfilling particular desires in that body, it leaves the same, carrying with it the mind and senses, like the wind carrying perfumes from flowers. The individual soul dwelling

in the body enjoys the objects of the world through the organs of sense. The ignorant, due to lack of this knowledge, identify the Self with the body, and experience pleasure and pain; while the wise, due to their wisdom, stand as witness of all their activities. The Yogis with perfection behold Him dwelling within themselves, but the ignorant, due to desires, even though they strive, are unable to see Him. Lord Krishna says that He alone makes the sun, moon, stars and fire to shine with light. He alone supports all the beings by permeating the earth with His energy, and becoming the watery moon He nourishes all herbs. He, by animating the Prana (ingoing breath) and Apana (outgoing breath) of all beings, digests the four kinds of food viz., (i) *Bhakshya* (solid food such as bread, rice, cake, etc.), (ii) *Bhojya* (that which can be swallowed such as gruel, curd, etc.), (iii) *Lehya* (that which is licked, such as honey, etc.), and (iv) *Chosya* (that which is sucked such as

juice of sugar-cane, mango, etc.). The Lord dwells in the hearts of all and from Him alone comes memory and knowledge as well as their absence. He is to be known through the Vedas and is the author of the Vedas as well as the real knower of the Vedas. There is the perishable and imperishable in the world. He is the Supreme Self pervading the three worlds and sustaining them. He transcends the perishable and is higher than the imperishable. Hence He is called *Purushottama* in the Vedas. Krishna says that he who knows by wisdom that He is the Supreme, all-pervading Being, worships Him with his whole heart. The Lord, after describing His all-pervasive existence in the world, asks Arjuna as well as the entire humanity to become wise by knowing this secret and reach the goal of human life, i.e., God-realisation.

In this chapter Lord Krishna describes that He alone exists in all names and forms,

either movable or immovable objects of the universe. All the planets including sun, moon and stars move and shine with a fraction of His energy. He alone exists as Consciousness in human beings in the physical, mental, psychological and other levels. The Lord says: "He, who is undeluded, thus knows Me as the Supreme Purusha, is the knower of all and worships Me with his whole being (heart)". He who understands this supreme secret knowledge, becomes wise; all his doubts and sufferings in the world come to an end spontaneously and he becomes the performer of all the duties."

Thus ends the Fifteenth Chapter entitled 'The Yoga of the Supreme Spirit.'

CHAPTER XVI

A human being is a combination of good and evil. By a proper use of the intellect one can become divine. Wise people, with their divine nature, knowing that the Lord is the Supreme Person (Purushottama), worship Him with their whole heart. The ignorant, due to desires, embrace the demoniacal nature, try to seek happiness in the objects of the world and forget to feel the presence of the Lord in them. Lord Krishna, in order to put humanity on the right path to reach the goal of life, and to discriminate what is right and wrong, describes the divine and demoniacal characters.

The Lord says that a person inclined to the path of liberation will have divine qualities like fearlessness, purity of mind, constant fixity of mind in the Yoga of meditation for the sake of Self-realisation, cha-

rity in its Sattvic form, control of the senses, sacrifices, study of scriptures, straightforwardness, harmlessness, truthfulness, absence of anger even on provocation, renunciation, peacefulness, absence of crookedness, compassion to all beings, uncovetousness, gentleness, modesty, absence of fickleness, vigour, forgiveness, fortitude, purity, absence of hatred, absence of pride, etc.

The person who is born with demoniac nature will have the devilish qualities of hypocrisy, arrogance, pride, anger, harshness and ignorance.

By the practice of the divine qualities one can secure absolute and everlasting freedom from the bondage of *Samsara* and attain supreme happiness; and by resort to demoniacal qualities one enters into bondage and suffering.

Lord Krishna further points out the

devilish characters of humanity. These ignorant ones have not the discriminative capacity to judge what is to be done and what is not to be done. They are impure and untruthful in their actions. They hold that the Universe is without truth, unreal, Godless, brought forth by the mutual union of the male and female and conceived by lust. Adhering to this view, these slow-witted men of small understanding and of fierce deeds become enemies of humanity as well as of the world as a whole. Filled with an insatiable desire for name, fame and power, with hypocrisy, pride and arrogance, cherishing evil ideas through delusion, they work with impure resolves. Hoping to fulfil their desires by accumulation of luxurious objects and hoarding wealth for sensual enjoyments, by unlawful means they become slaves to lust and anger and believe that it is their goal of life. They say to themselves, "This has been secured today and so

much wealth is already possessed and I hope to do the same for future also. I have defeated so many and I will conquer others too who are not controlled so far," etc. Bewildered by many a fancy, entangled in the meshes of delusion and addicted to the gratification of desires, they fall into a foul hell. Intoxicated with wealth and honour, filled with pride and arrogance, they perform sacrifices for name and fame, contrary to spiritual ordinances. Due to egoism, power, pride, lust and anger, these malicious people hate God who is dwelling in them as well as in others. The Lord says that His inexorable law shall put these evil-doers in the wombs of demons through the cycle of births and deaths. They, entering into demoniacal wombs, and deluded in birth as well as death, without attaining God, will fall into a still lower condition, i.e., such states as of animals and beasts. Knowing this, one should renounce the three evil

qualities,—lust, anger and greed—which lead one to hell, and scrupulously follow the path of the sages and saints keeping the scripture as one's guide. Thus one attains supreme blessedness. But he who discards the scriptural law, acts under the impulse of desire, attains neither perfection, nor the goal, nor even happiness. Therefore, let the scriptures be thy guide for determining what should be done and what should not be done. Knowing this, you ought to perform only such action as is ordained by the scriptures.

This chapter teaches that everyone should analyse oneself and find out the undesirable traits in one's own character and rectify them then and there with discrimination and introspection. For this, one must be true to one's own Self and be a witness of the mental functions. Then alone one can know whether the thoughts and actions, will do good to oneself. The Daivi

Sampat and the Asuri Sampat,—the positive and negative forces referred to in this chapter are not goodness and badness in the ordinary sense. Here we have a more philosophical concept of the opposites than we ordinarily take in the moral field. The very principle of opposition metaphysically is confronted and resolved for ever. The universe is the body of God. In that integrated universal Individual there cannot be a conflict between the positive and negative (Asura and Deva). It is overcome and the universal attitude of pure Sattva which is called Sraddha comes into play.

Thus ends the Sixteenth Chapter entitled 'The Yoga of the Division between the Divine and the Demoniacal.'

CHAPTER XVII

On hearing the words of Lord Krishna that the scripture alone should be one's guide and that one should perform actions as ordained by the scriptures, Arjuna asks what will be the condition of those who perform sacrifices with faith, but setting aside the ordinances of the scriptures. The Lord classifies faith into three types and says that faith in God alone will determine the character of a person. Worship of God is done by three kinds of persons, Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic, but the result will be according to their faith. Good people (Sattvic) worship the gods, the passionate (Rajasic) worship the demigods and demons, and the dull (Tamasic) worship ghosts and spirits of the dead. Lord Krishna says that those who do terrific austerities which are not ordained by the scriptures without renouncing lust, greed and anger,

torturing the body in the name of penance, are people of Rajasic faith. Being foolish, they emaciate the group of elements in the body, as well as the indwelling Supreme Spirit, in their heart. Know these to be demoniac in their resolves.

Actions are divided into three kinds, —Sattvic, Rajasic or Tamasic. Sacrifice, charity and penance including food which is dear to all, have these three qualities. Foods which increase long life, purity, strength, health, joy and cheerfulness, those that are sweet, soft, nourishing and agreeable, are dear to the Sattvic people. Foods that are bitter, sour, saltish, very hot, pungent, harsh and burning, which produce pain, grief and disease, are liked by the Rajasic people. Foods which are spoiled, tasteless, putrid, stale and impure are liked by Tamasic people. The body is built up by the food taken in, and so the quality of food is important.

The sacrifice performed according to scriptural injunctions, without expectation of result, is Sattvic. The sacrifice performed with expectation of fruit and for the sake of display is Rajasic. The sacrifice which has no respect for scriptural injunctions, wherein food and gifts are not distributed, and which is performed for the sake of name and fame is Tamasic.

Penances are of body, speech or mind. Worship of gods, the knowers of the Vedas, teachers, possessors of wisdom; living in purity, straightforwardness, continence, non-injury, etc., are called austerity of body. Speech which causes no excitement, which is truthful, pleasant and beneficial, practice of the study of the scriptures and repetition of the Divine Name, etc. are called the austerity of speech. Cheerfulness of mind, gentleness, silence, self-control and purity of motive, are called the austerity of mind. All these are Sattvic austerities. The aus-

terity which is practised with the motive of gaining respect, honour, reverence and show is said to be Rajasic, unstable and momentary. The austerity which is practised with a foolish notion, with self-torture, or for causing injury to others, is said to be Tamasic.

Charity which is made to one from whom no return is expected, with a feeling that it is one's duty to give, in a fit place and time, to a worthy person, is said to be Sattvic. If the charity is made in a grudging spirit, with the object of getting a service in return, or with expectation of a future gain, or if it hurts while being given, it is said to be Rajasic. Charity given at a wrong place and time and to an unworthy person, without respect, or with insult, is declared as Tamasic. In order to perform sacrifice, austerity and charity in a Sattvic manner, with the feeling of God's presence, and to remove defects in it, Lord Krishna

advises Arjuna that these acts should be done with the utterances of the Name of God: 'Om Tat Sat'. 'Om' represents the symbol of God and is the essence of all the Vedas. 'Tat' gives the feeling that everything belongs to God, i.e., it removes the sense of 'I'-ness and 'mine'-ness. 'Sat' represents the eternal and essential character of God, and removes the selfish interest of the doer and enables him to realise God.

Lord Krishna tells Arjuna that whatever sacrifice, austerity or charity is performed without faith is termed as 'Asat', (unreal and evil) and it is of no value either here or hereafter.

This chapter teaches humanity that all actions (mental and physical) when done with a discriminative mind and faith lead one to the Supreme good.

Thus ends the Seventeenth Chapter entitled 'The Yoga of the Threefold Division of Faith.'

CHAPTER XVIII

The teachings of Lord Krishna present an art of living together with a comprehensive understanding of life. The Bhagavadgita is a complete guide for how to be, how to think and how to act in all grades and stages of evolution of human beings. Lord Krishna taught Arjuna Karma Yoga, Sankhya Yoga, Bhakti Yoga and Jnana Yoga, together with the disciplines to be adopted. It is this completeness of Practical Wisdom that has made this scripture (Gita) immortal. In order to gather the essence of all the teachings imparted, Arjuna expresses his desire to know the true nature of renunciation (Sannyasa) and relinquishment (Tyaga).

Lord Krishna replies that the opinion of the wise is that renunciation of works with desire is 'Sannyasa' and abandonment

of the fruits of actions is 'Tyaga.' Some learned people say that action should be renounced and others say that acts of sacrifice, gift and penance are not to be given up. Krishna declares his opinion that one should not renounce obligatory works like sacrifice, gift and penance, but the fruit of these should be renounced. Because sacrifice, gift and also austerity are the purifiers of the wise. He, who renounces his own duty that ought to be done, is declared to be Tamasic. He, who abandons duty for fear of physical strain, thinking that all actions bring the same discomfort, is called Rajasic. He does not gain the reward of that renunciation. He, who performs his prescribed duty as a thing that ought to be done, renouncing attachment and desire, is called Sattvic. The wise man who renounces is pervaded by purity and intelligence, and with his doubts dispelled, has no aversion to disagreeable action and no

attachment to agreeable action.

Since all actions cannot be given up in their entirety by anyone possessing a body, he alone who renounces the fruit of actions is called a man of renunciation. To those who have not relinquished the fruit of actions, will accrue the threefold fruit of action, viz., evil, good and mixed, but never to the abandoners. Upto this time Lord Krishna explained at full length the truth of Tyaga or Karma Yoga. Now He expounds the truth of Sannyasa or Sankhya Yoga in accordance with the doctrine of the Sankhya Philosophy. He says, the seat of action (body), the doer (agent), the instruments of various sorts (senses), the organs of different kinds and the separate movement of divergent type and the presiding deity (Providence) are the five factors contributory in the accomplishment of actions. Whatever action a man undertakes by his body, speech or mind, whe-

ther it is right or wrong, these five are its causes. But due to ignorance and lack of understanding, he who looks upon his Self, which is isolated (actionless), as the agent, he of perverted intelligence sees not. He who is free from doership, whose intelligence is not tainted (by good or evil) though he slays people, he slayeth not, nor is he bound (by such actions). The Self is actionless. Due to impurity of mind, the ignorant identify the Self with the body and senses, and claim doership in all actions. The knower, knowledge and the knowable are the three impulses to action through the organs of body, mind and speech. Lord Krishna describes Jnana (knowledge) by which the One Imperishable Being is beheld in all existences. Karma (action) and Karta (doer) are governed by the modes of Gunas, viz., Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. In order to develop Sattvic qualities which help one to-

wards God-realisation, one has to reject the Rajasic and Tamasic qualities which are prejudicial to it.

The knowledge by which one perceives the Imperishable Divine Existence, undivided and equally present in all beings, is called Sattvic. The knowledge by which one sees multiplicity of beings in creation is called Rajasic. The knowledge by which one clings to one object, as if it were the whole, without using discrimination, and grasping it as real, is called Tamasic.

The action (Karma) which is ordained by the scriptures, and performed without attachment and expectation of result, is called Sattvic. The action performed with desire and strain, with expectation of result, is called Rajasic. The action performed with ignorance, without a regard for its practicability and consequence, as loss, injury, etc., is called Tamasic.

The doer (Karta) who has no ego and attachment, who is endued with firmness and enthusiasm and is unaffected by success or failure is called Sattvic. The doer who is swayed by passion, who eagerly seeks the fruit of his actions, and who is greedy, impure, violent and moved by pleasure and pain is Rajasic. The doer who is unsteady, vulgar, obstinate, deceitful, malicious, indolent, despondent and procrastinating is called Tamasic.

Lord Krishna describes what is meant by understanding and firmness (*Buddhi* and *Dhriti*) according to the Gunas. The intellect which knows the path of work (action) and renunciation (inaction), i.e., the intellect which knows what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, the difference between fear and fearlessness and what will bind and free the soul, is called Sattvic. The intellect by which one cannot perceive *Dharma* (righteousness)

and *Adharma* (unrighteousness), what should be done and should not be done, is called Rajasic. The intellect which is enveloped by ignorance, which has a wrong understanding of Dharma and Adharma and has perverted knowledge, is called Tamasic.

The unwavering firmness (steadiness) by which, through the practice of Yoga, one restrains the activities of the mind, the life-force and the senses by observing the golden medium is called Sattvic. The firmness by which one holds fast to duty (Dharma), earthly possessions and worldly enjoyments on account of attachment and desire for reward, is called Rajasic. The firmness by which a fool does not give up too much sleep, fear, grief, depression and arrogance is called Tamasic.

There is no creature either on earth or among the gods in the heaven free from the three Gunas. That happiness which

gives pain at first and is like nectar at the end, born out of purity of one's own mind due to Self-realisation, is called Sattvic. That happiness which arises from the contact of the sense-organs with the objects of the world outside, at first like nectar, but in the end like poison, is called Rajasic. That happiness which deludes the soul in the beginning as well as in the end, which arises from sleep, indolence and negligence, is called Tamasic.

People, according to their inborn qualities and actions have been divided into four categories, viz., Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra. Serenity, self-control, austerity, purity, forbearance, uprightness, knowledge and faith in religion, wisdom, teaching of scriptures and truths relating to God are the inborn natures of a Brahmana. Heroism, firmness, cleverness and steadiness in battle, generosity and leadership are the inborn natures of a Kshatriya.

Agriculture, cattle-rearing and trade are the inborn natures of a Vaisya. Service to the above three classes is the inborn nature of a Sudra. When one performs one's own duty with devotion, one attains perfection and reaches the goal of life.

Each one takes birth in a particular environment according to one's desire and stage of evolution. That is why some people are rich and some are poor, some are dull and some are intelligent and scholarly, by birth itself. Understanding these, one must be self-contented and should not try to forgo one's ordained duty for the sake of respect or name, fame, status etc. He who does not understand this truth will not perform his duty or the duty of another. Hence the Supreme Lord says: "Better is one's own duty though destitute of merits, than the duty of another well performed. He who does the duty ordained by his own nature incurs no sin". Therefore, one

should not give up one's inborn duty even though it may bring disrespect in society, for, all enterprises are clouded by defect, as fire is covered by smoke.

Thus Lord Krishna defined what Tyaga and Sannyasa are, and gave details of the path of Knowledge. Then, again, He explained the truth relating to Tyaga which is another name for Karma-Yoga or path of action, its obligatory characters with different qualities and showed the relation of Bhakti with Karma-Yoga. He also explained that Karma-Yoga is easy to practise in day-to-day life in all grades and stages of evolution, and said that action done with devotion leads to God-realisation.

Lord Krishna describes Sankhya Yoga (the path of renunciation). He whose intellect is unattached anywhere, whose thirst for enjoyment has altogether disappeared and who has subdued his mind, reaches the

supreme state transcending all work. After having attained actionlessness (supreme perfection) which is the consummation of Jnana Yoga, he reaches Brahman.

Now Krishna describes Jnana Yoga and the qualifications that will make one become one with Brahman.

Endowed with a purified intellect, with the correct understanding of Sankhya Yoga, living in a lonely place, restraining the mind from outward activities, after having rejected the value of sensory perception, transcending desires with proper understanding, overcoming egotism through an ever-devoted practice of the Yoga of meditation, one experiences the supreme Consciousness of Brahman. By a regular and constant awareness of the Supreme Consciousness, serene in the Self, he neither grieves nor desires, he treats equally all beings by the perception of the single con-

sciousness, and attains supreme devotion or universal love towards the Almighty Lord who is all-pervading, and merges into Brahman (attains God-consciousness). Having described the path of renunciation (Jnana-Yoga) which can be practised only by a very few, Lord Krishna exhorts Arjuna to do his duty as a Karma-Yogi.

The Karma-Yogi who depends on God and acts as His instrument attains His Grace, by performance of his own duty. Krishna asks Arjuna to do his own duty without expectation of its result. He asks him to become a Karma-Yogi and take refuge in Him. The Lord says: "Even if you fail to do any action due to ignorance, Nature will force you to do the same, because one cannot live without performing actions even for a single minute. The Supreme Lord abides in the heart of all beings, causing them to act, through His power. He alone does everything. Take refuge in Him

and act. "Fix thy mind on Me, be devoted to Me, sacrifice all your actions to Me; you will merge in Me. Abandoning everything else, take refuge in Me alone with all your being. I shall release you from all evil. I have mentioned to you this highest wisdom; now do as you like."

The Lord concludes by saying that this secret should not be revealed to one who is not austere in life and who has no devotion to and faith in God due to arrogance. He who teaches this supreme secret to the devotees of God, with true devotion, will doubtlessly reach God. He who studies this dialogue will be considered as one who worships God through the sacrifice of knowledge.

He who listens to this conversation between Krishna and Arjuna will attain the supreme beatitude.

Lord Krishna queries Arjuna if all his

doubts are cleared, whether he is rid of his doubts regarding his own duty. Arjuna says that he has gained his lost memory and strength to fight by His grace, his doubts are cleared and he will act according to the words of Krishna.

Thus, Sanjaya recounted to Dhritarashtra the conversation between Lord Krishna and Arjuna. He had listened to this secret of Yoga and feels overjoyed with the vision of the Cosmic Form of the Lord, which he had by the grace of Vyasa who bestowed on him the vision spiritual.

Sanjaya assures that wherever is Krishna, the Lord of Yoga, and wherever is Arjuna, the wielder of the bow (one who has surrendered his ego to the Lord), there are doubtlessly, prosperity, victory, happiness and firm polity.

By reading this chapter of the Gita one can know one's stage and level of evo-

lution, quality and faith towards the Almighty. By self-analysis and with a discriminative intellect one must move towards the Self (God) with an integrated and total personality like the whole river moving towards the ocean unceasingly. The purpose of the motion of the river is to reach the motionless state of the ocean. Likewise all our effort is necessary to reach the effortless Supreme State.

Thus ends the Eighteenth Chapter entitled 'The Yoga of Liberation through Renunciation'.

Om Tat Sat

AIMS AND OBJECTS

OF THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

I. To Disseminate Spiritual Knowledge

(a) By publication of books, pamphlets and magazines dealing with ancient, oriental and occidental philosophy, religion and medicine in the modern scientific manner, and their distribution on such terms as may appear expedient to the Board of Trustees;

(b) By propagating the Name of the Lord, and by holding and arranging spiritual discourses and conferences and frequent Sankirtans or spiritual gatherings for singing and glorifying the Name of the Lord;

(c) By establishing training centres or societies for the practice of Yoga, for moral and spiritual Sadhanas and the re-

vival of true culture, to enable aspirants to achieve regeneration through worship, devotion, wisdom, right action and higher meditation, with systematic training in Asanas, Pranayama, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi; and

(d) By doing all such acts and things as may be necessary and conducive to the moral, spiritual and cultural uplift of mankind in general and to the attainment of the above-mentioned objects in Bharatavarsha in particular;

II. To Establish and Run Educational Institutions

On modern lines and on right basic principles and to help deserving students by granting them refundable or non-refundable scholarships for doing research work in the various branches of existing scriptures and comparative religion, as also to train them to disseminate spiritual know-

ledge in the most effective manner;

III. To Help Deserving Orphans and Destitutes

By rendering them such assistance as the Society may deem proper, whether in any individual case or in any particular class of cases;

IV. To Establish and Run Medical Organisations

Or any other medical institutions and hospitals or dispensaries for the treatment of diseases and dispensing medicines and performing surgical operations etc., to the poor in particular and to the other public in general, on such terms and in such manner as may be deemed expedient by the Board of Trustees;

V. To Take Such other Steps from Time to Time

As may be necessary for effecting a

quick and effective moral and spiritual regeneration in the world and in Bharatavarsha in particular.

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This Society was registered as a Trust in the year 1936 and has been actively functioning since then to fulfil the above sublime aims and objects in the world.

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